THE

MEMOIRS

OF

NINON DE L'ENCLOS:

With her LETTERS to

MONS. De ST. EVREMOND

AND TO THE

Marquis de Sevigné.

Collected and Tranſlated from the FRENCH

By MRS. GRIFFITH

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Donec erunt ignes, arcique cælidinis arma,
Discentur numeri, culte Tibulle, tui.

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M,DCC,LXXVII

TO

HER GRACE

P

he Ducheſs of bedford.

May it pleaſe your Grace.

AM aware of the ſurprize you muſt be in at ſeeing a work addreſſed to you, ithout your conſent, without your knowdge, or perhap your having ever heard f the book which I here preſent you ith.

All writers propoſe doing honour to eir works, by dedicating them to me great perſonage; no one can have

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this motive more in view than I, when I take the liberty of addreſſing this volume to your Grace. But though I am certain that your patronage, like the ſtamp on coin, will at once render it curr•nt, and cover its allay, I frankly confeſs that I am actuated by ſome other inducements; the firſt and ſtrongeſt of which is, the pride and pleaſure I am ſenſible of, in proclaiming the ſincere gratitude and high reſpect I owe to the Ducheſs of Bedford.

I preſent you Madam, with the produce of my leiſure, as the antients were wont to bequeath their unportioned orphans to the nobleſt and moſt generous of their patrons; and as your Grace's character has al ady declared you poſſeſſed of their other excellencies, I will not douot your kind adoption of this lit tle foundling, ſent into the world without

a *name*,

name, or any merit but what it may be ntitled to from *Your's*.

Another reaſon for ſtealing this addreſs pon you was, that if I had been prevent- d from preſenting this book to your ;race, I ſhould have loſt the advantage f the juſtification which I premiſe myſelf pon publiſhing this work: the world nay be well aſſured I do not imagine there any thing in theſe writings that can of- :nd the moſt reſerved ear, when I ven- ıre to preſent them firſt to a perſon whoſe ıaracter and ſtation ſo juſtly intitle her to ıe higheſt and niceſt reſpect.

As I tremble at the apprehenſion of ap- :aring in print without a maſk, I ſhall not bſcribe my name to this addreſs, and am ry certain that I may ſtill main concealed nidſt a crowd, tho' I conteſs myſel to be ıe of thoſe, to whom your Grace s genero- y and benevolence have given juſt reaſon of

declaring themſelves, as I have the honour of doing at preſent.

May it pleaſe your GRACE,

Your GRACE'S *much obliged,*

moſt grateful, moſt humble,

and obedient Servant,

The TRANSLATOR.

To

To Mrs.

Upon reading this Work.

WHILST Ninon's ſpirit kindles all love's fire,
Thy moral chaſtens every l deſire.
Thy regulated paſſion, void of blame,
Warms without ſcorching, like the veſtal flame.
I trembled for you as I read along,
But found your reaſon cool, your virtue ſtrong:
With ſuch addreſs the dangerous theme you treat,
As muſt the libertine's free hopes defeat:
Thy wit th' aſbeſto's property obtains,
Which from the hotteſt fire a p neſs gains.
Like Emma's too, thy chaſtity appears,
Who rang'd unhurt, amidſt the burning *ſhares*.

THE

INTRODUCTION.

IN a weekly paper, lately publiſhed, ſtiled THE WORLD, (Numb. 28) I met with the following extraordinary paſſage. Speaking of the famous Ninon de l'Enclos, he ſays, " It was in her fifty-
" ſixth year, that the Chevalier de Vil-
" liers, a natural ſon whom ſhe had by
" the Count de Gerze, arrived at Paris
" from the provinces, where we had been
" educated without any knowledge of his
" real parents. He ſaw his mother—He
" fell

" fell in love with her. The increaſe, the
" vehemence of his paſſion, gave the great-
" eſt diſquiet to the affectionate matron
" At laſt, when nothing but a diſcovery of
" the ſecret could put a ſtop to the impetu-
" oſity of his attempts, ſhe carried him into
" her bed-chamber, and pointing to a
" clock, cried, *Raſh youth, look there! at*
" *that hour, two and twenty years ago, I*
" *was delivered of you in this very bed!* It is
" a certain fact, that the unfortunate, a-
" baſhed young man, flew into the garden
" and fell upon his ſword.

" This cataſtrophe had like to have de-
" prived the age of the moſt accompliſhed
" miſtreſs that ever adorned the Cytherean
" annals. It was above twenty years be-
" fore the affected mother would liſten to
" any addreſſes of a tender nature. At
" length, the polite Abbe de Gedoine
" preſſed and obtained an aſſignation.

" He

" He came, and found the enchanting
" Ninon reclining on a couch, like the
" *Grandmother* of the *Loves*, in the moſt
" galant deſhabille. He aſked her, but
" with the greateſt air of reſpect, why ſhe
" had ſo long deferred the completion of
" his happineſs? I muſt confeſs, replied
" ſhe, it proceeded from a remain of va-
" nity: I piqued myſelf upon having a
" lover at fourſcore, and it was but yeſter-
" day that I was eighty compleat."

This extract naturally raiſed my curioſi-ty to inquire a little farther after ſo extraor dinary a woman; and I found out that ſhe lived in the reign of Lewis the four-teenth, and held a correſpondence with Monſieur de Saint Evremond, during his exile in England. Some of her letters are among his works, and others I have met with elſewhere; both of which I he e pre-ſent the reader with; and ſhall add St. Evremond's letters in this correſpondence,

as

as they may ſerve to illuſtrate hers, and will prove an additional entertainment to the publ

But firſt, I muſt premiſe a hint, that if any one ſhould take the trouble of comparing theſe pages with the original ones, they may, perhaps, diſcover a method of tranſlating, quite new; about which I beg to have the opinion of the *Literati*. Chance or neceſſity have ſometimes produced good things; among which, very poſſibly, this may happen to be one; that not being perfect *miſtreſs* of the French idiom, I was obliged to read the letters frequently over in order to catch the ſpirit of the writers; which I have endeavoured to convey to the readers, in ſuch a free manner as one tells a ſtory, or repeats converſation; by imitating the humour or expreſſing the ſentiment, though not in the ſame literal way they received it.

Need I make any apology or leaving out paſſages, that I did not think would entertain; or for bringing two ſentences together, which were ſeparate in the original, when I imagined they might reflect mutual light on the other, by being joined in the ſame paragraph?

LETTERS

LETTERS

BETWEEN

NINON and St. EVREMOND.

NINON.

MONSIEUR de Charleval is juſt dead; at which I am ſo much afflicted, that I endeavour to conſole myſelf by conſidering the part you will take in my grief. I viſited him every day: his mind had all the charms of youth, and his heart every tenderneſs and goodneſs that could be requiſite in a ſincere friend.

He often ſpoke of you, and of all the original wits of our time. His life, and that I lead at preſent, had a great deal of reſemblance. In fine, ſuch a loſs is worſe than death itſelf.

Pray let me hear from you. I am as much concerned about your welfare at London, as if you were ſtill at Paris. O friendſhips have charms, which are never ſo well known, is when we are deprived of them. Adieu

N I N O N.

I WAS alone in my apartment, and quite tired with reading, when a ſervant came and told me there was a gentleman below, who came from Monſieur de St. Evremond. You may conclude that all my wearineſs was immediately ſhaken off; I had the pleaſure of talking of you, and was thereby informed of little particulars, that letters cannot ſo well acquaint us with. He gave me an account of your perfect health, and the manner of your ſpending your time. The livelineſs of your wit ſhews the effect of both; and your letters flatter me that England has forty years more of life in ſtore for you. I think it is there only, that they ſpeak of people who have outlived the age of man. I could have wiſhed to paſs the remainder of my life with you; and had you thought as I do, you would have been in this country ere now (a). However, it is very agreeable to recollect thoſe perſons we have loved; and perhaps this ſeparation of our perſons has been made to embelliſh my epitaph (b).

I wiſh your young divine had found me in *the glory of Niquèe*, (c) where people never ſuffer any change; for I believe you think me one of the perſons inchanted in it. Do not alter you opinion in

(a) He had been baniſhed from France on account of an humorous ſatire he had written againſt Cardinal Mazarin. After the death of the Cardinal he had leave to return, but declined it.

(b) She means that the duration and conſtancy of her friendſhip for St. Evremond, might be numbered among the merits of her elegy. He ſays as much himſelf, in the laſt paragraph of the ſecond Letter following.

(c) See Amadi de Gaul.

in this matter, which has been always favoarable to me, and let this kind of intercourſe, that ſome philoſophers think better than preſences continue to our life's end.

I told the Abbe Turetin, that I ſhould be pleaſed to do him any manner of ſervice. He has already become acquainted with ſome of my friends here, who have found him worthy of the character you have given him. If he has a mind to converſe with the honeſt abbots, who remain here in the abſence of the court, he ſhall be received as a man whom you eſteem. I read your letter before him with ſpectacles on; but they do not ill become me, for I had always a grave mien. If he is enamoured of that ſort of merit, that is here ſtiled *diſtinguiſhed*, perhaps your wiſh may be accompliſhed; for they endeavour to comfort me every day, for my loſſes, by this flattering expreſſion!

You wiſh la Fontaine in England. We have but little of his company at Paris. His underſtanding is much impaired. This is the fate of poets. Lucretius and Taſſo were examples of it I believe however, that there has not been any philtres given to him, for he had not much commerce with women who could afford the expence of them. Adieu.

ST. EVREMOND.

MONSIEUR Turetin is extremely obliged to me for introducing him to your acquaintance; and I am alſo obliged to him for giving occaſion to the agreeable letter I have juſt received from you.

I do not doubt but he found you with the ſame eye that I formerly ſo much admired in you, thoſe eye by which I could always perceive the conqueſt of a new lover, when they uſed to ſparkle more than uſual.

You are ſtill the ſame to me; and though time, that ravager of all things, ſhould have exerted its utmoſt effort to demoliſh your beauty, my imagination will always ſupply the *glory of Niquee* to you. I am very ſure that with regard to your eyes and teeth, you have no occaſion for it. What you ſtand moſt in need of in my judgment, is to comprehend thoroughly the advantages of your ſenſe and apprehenſion, which ſeem to improve every Day. In ſhort, you have at preſent more wit and vivacity, than even the young and ſprightly Ninon ever had. Adieu.

St. EVREMOND.

I Have received your ſecond letter: it is obliging, agreeable, and full of wit. I perceive in it at once, the humour of Ninon, and the good ſenſe of Madam de L'Enclos. I know how the former lived, and I learn from you after what manner the other paſſes her time. Every thing contributes to make me regret the happy days I have enjoyed in your company, and to deſire, in vain, to behold you once more! I have not ſtrength enough to tranſport myſelf over to France, and you have attachments there, which will prevent you from coming to England. The Dutcheſs of Bouillon can inform you that England has its charms; and I ſhould be ungrateful myſelf, if I did not acknowledge that I had met with ſatisfaction and pleaſure in it

I am glad to hear that the Count de Grammont has recovered his former health, and acquired a new devotion. Hitherto I have been contented with being a good ſort of a plain, honeſt man; but I muſt do ſomething more now, and only wait for your example to become godly. You live in a country where people have extraordinary ad antages towald ſaving their ſouls. There, vice is almoſt as much againſt the faſhion, as againſt virtue: ſinning paſſes for ill-breeding; ſhocks decencency, and offends good manners, as much as religion. Formerly, it ſufficed to be wicked. But at preſent one muſt be a ſcoundrel, to be damned in France. They who have not regald enough for another life, are led to ſalvation by the conſiderations and duties of this (d).

But enough, upon a ſubject in which the converſation of the Count de Grammont has engaged me. I believe it to be ſincere and honeſt. It well becomes a man who is no longer young, to forget that he ever had been ſo. This is, however, what I could never yet arrive at. On the contrary, from the remembrance of my younger years, and

(d) The Æra here pointed out, was the meredian of Madame de Maintenon's power: who by her ſingle virtue, through her influence over Lewis the Fourteenth, reclaimed a debauched monarch and a licentious court. This paſſage of St. Bvremond, is a moſt admirable deſcription of that happy ſtate of morals and manners to which the powerful example of crowned heads may reform a nation! I ſhall not diſpute in Politics, the preference of monarchy over other forms of government; ut in Virtue, its advantages are as much ſuperior, as example is to precept. Or, higher ſtill, as the goſpel to hiloſophy. "Be wiſe · now therefore, O kin s! Be learned, ye " aat are judges of the ean h." Pſalms.

recollection of paſt vivacity, I endeavour to animate and rouſe up the ſluggiſhneſs of age.

What I find moſt to be regretted at this period, is, that hope is fled! Hope, the ſweeteſt paſſion of the ſoul, and which ſo kindly ſupplies the abſence of every other enjoyment of life! What renders me moſt uneaſy at preſent, is my deſpairing ever to ſee you again. I muſt command then, for the pleaſure of writing to you ſometimes, in order to keep up a friendſhip that has yet withſtood length of time, diſtance of place, and the uſual coldneſs of old age. This laſt expreſſion alludes to myſelf only; for nature will begin with you, to ſhew that it is poſſible not to grow old. Adieu.

NINON.

I LEARN with pleaſure that my ſoul is dearer to you than my body; and that your good ſenſe leads you always to what is beſt. In truth, the latter deſerves no farther regard; but, the former has yet ſome glimmering light that ſupports, and touches it ſenſibly, at the remembrance of a friend, whoſe lineaments abſence has not been able to efface.

I often tell old ſtories, in which Monſieur d'Elbene, de Charleval, and the Chevalier de Riviere, have done honour to the moderns. You are alſo ſpoken of with advantage upon theſe occaſions; but I am ſilent on this head, before the members of the French Academy who have declared for the antients (e).

I hear

(e) There was a curious criticiſm about that time among the Literati of France, whether the antient or moderns

I hear of a prologue ſet to muſic, which I long to ſee performed upon our Theatre. The beauty, who is the ſubject of it, would raiſe the envy of the whole audience. All our Helens have not the fortune to be celebrated by a Homer, and ranked among the goddeſſes of beauty. I have now got very high.—How ſhall I deſcend again? My dear Friend, ought we not to ſuffer the heart to ſpeak its own language? (f) The Dutcheſs of Bouillon looks as if ſhe was but eighteen: the ſpring of beauty runs through the blood of the Mazarins.

Now our kings are friends, would you not do well to take a trip hither? This would be to me the greateſt bleſſing of the peace. Adieu and be aſſured that I ſtill love you more tenderly, than philoſophy admits of.

ST. EVREMOND.

I HAVE a ſenſible pleaſure in beholding young, handſome and blooming perſons, who are capable of raiſing any ſort of emotion in a heart ſo old as mine. As there has always been a great reſemblance between our taſtes, humours, and ſentiments, I think you will not be diſpleaſed to

moderns were ſuperior in point of genu Fontenelle wrote an Eſſay on this ſubject, replete with wit and good ſenſe. He determines, like a true philoſopher, that nature has been always favourable in her productions; conſequently, the capacities of mankind at all times the ſame. He humdulouſly aſks the *Fautors* of Antiquity, whether the tre were taller in thoſe days, than at preſent?

f) She ſpeaks this in opi ſition to figurative on poe- manners of expreſſion.

fee a youn nobleman who has had the merit and addreſs of rendering himſelf agreeable to all the ladies on our ſide of the water. I have therefore deſired the Duke of St. Alban's to viſit you, as much for his own ſatisfaction, as for yours.

Pray let me know how our old friend de Gourville does; and prithee uſe your intereſt with him to ſend me ſome good wine. I lodge with Monſieur de l'Hermitage one of his relations, a very honeſt man, who fled hither, on accennt of religion. It was unlucky for him that the conſciences of the French catholics would not ſuffer him to ſtay in his own country, or that the ſcrupulouſneſs of his own, obliged him to leave it. He certainly deſerves the eſteem of his couſin.

If there comes over with Mareſchal Tallard, any of your friends of the merit of our time, to whom I can render any manner of ſervice, I pray you command me.

The Counteſs of Sandwich is going to France, for her health. The late Earl of Rocheſter her father, had more wit than any man in England: ſhe has more wit than her father, as much generoſity as wit, and is every other way as amiable as ſhe is liberal and ingenious.

Doctor Morelli, my particular friend, accompanies her. Prithee facilitate his acquaintance with all your celebrated Genii. If he has yours, I eſteem him ſufficiently happy. You cannot introduce him to any perſon of ſo ſingular a merit as yourſelf (g)

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(g) Here St. Evremond enters into a long detail of the Doctor's character: but as it had no relation to this correſpondence, I have thought proper to leave out the paſſage.

I think

I think that Epicurus made one part of his *chief good* to conſiſt in the remembrance of things paſt. There is no *Summum Bonum* for a man of a hundred years old like me. (h) But there are ſtill ſome comforts left; and that of remembering you and all that I have heard you ſay, is one of my greateſt.

I write a great many things that you will not much attend to; nor do I really conſider whether they may be tedious to you, or no, 'tis enough that I amuſe myſelf at this age. I have not the preſumption to imagine I can be capable of pleaſing others. My ſole merit is to be able to content myſelf; and I am very happy in being ſtill capable of doing ſo, by writing to you. Adieu.

NINON.

HOW came you to imagine that the ſight of a young man would be agreeable to me? You judge, I ſuppoſe, of other people's ſentiments by your own: but, I have forgot every thing now, except my friends; and if the title of *Doctor*, had not given me courage, your Engliſh folks ſhould never have heard a word from mo

My porter told them I was not at home, and took your letter, which gave me as much pleaſure as any I had ever received from you How deſirous you are of having good wine, and how unhappy am I that cannot accommodate you! Monſieur de l'Hermitage could tell you as well as I. that de Gourville does not ſtir out of his chamber.

(h) He ſpeaks figuratively: as he was then near ninety.

ber. He is pretty much indifferent about all manner of taſtus A good friend ſtill: but people never think of employing him, for fear of giving him trouble. However, if upon any opportunity that I do not foreſee, I can uſe my addreſs for the wine, you may depend upon me.

Mareſchal Tallard was formerly one of my friends; but great affairs make great men negligent of things that are uſeleſs to them. I am told that the Abbe du Bois will go over with him: he is a little, lively man, that I fancy will pleaſe you.

I have twenty of your letters in my poſſeſſion. They are read here with great applauſe. You ſee that a good taſte is not quite extinct in France. I was charmed at that part of your laſt, where you are not much concerned about being tireſome; and in truth, you are wiſe if you are henceforward only concerned about yourſelf. Not but that the opinion is falſe, with regard to you, "That you are no longer capable of "pleaſing others."

Farewel.

ST. EVREMOND.

YOUR life, my dear friend, has been too illuſtrious not to be continued uniformly to the end. Let not La Rochefaucault's hell alarm you. (a). It was a premeditated one, that he wanted to make a ſentiment of. Pronounce then, the word *Love*, boldly; but never ſuffer that of *Old Age*, to ſlip out of your lips. There is ſo much ſpirit in your letter, that there is not the leaſt room to imagine you even at the beginning of a decline. What ingratitude then, to become

(a) He ſtiled Old Age the hell of women.

aſham'd

aſhamed of that charming paſſion, to which you are indebted, both for your merit and your pleaſure? Acknowledge all your paſſions, to give the full merit to all your virtues.

However you have expreſſed but one half of your character.—Nothing can be better than that part which relates to your friends: nothing more flat than what regards your lovers. I ſhall draw your picture at full length, in a few lines; and pleaſe to accept it here, framed out of all the qualities that you either have, or ever did poſſeſs.

Fickle in love, in friendſhip ſtill ſincere;
Love has her tranſports; friendſhip virtues rare:
Indulgent Nature has to Ninon given
Two characters, befitting Earth or Heaven;
Epicurean taſte to revel here,
And Cato's virtues to inſure her there. (b)

Adieu.

ST. EVREMOND.

I HAVE beeen enquiring after you, from all the world, for theſe twelve months paſt, and could not receive any manner of information. At length Monſieur de la Baſtide gave me ome account of you

(b) The French verſes contain twenty lines; but as there is but one thought in them ſpun out by repetitions, I have only tranſlated the ſix laſt, in which the whole ſpirit of the Epigram conſiſts.

The Sterling Bullion of one Engliſh line,
Drawn to French wire, would through whole pages ſhine
POPE.

you He ſays that you are well, and that tho' you have not now ſo many lovers, as formerly, you ſeem perfectly contented with having preſerved a great number of friends.

'The improbability of this laſt article, makes me doubt the truth of the former. You were born to love all the days of your life. There is a reſemblance between lovers and gameſters: *Whoever has loved, will always love.* If I had been told that you had become devout, I might have believed it; for this is paſſing, from a human paſſion, to a divine one: 'tis ſtill ſupplying employment for the ſoul; but not to love, is a kind of annihilation; which can never ſuit with the natural frame of your mind.

I beg you will inform me of your health, your temper and your occupations; and this in a very long letter, that muſt contain but little morality, and a great deal of affection for your old friend. As for news, relating to peace or war, I aſk you none: I neither write any thing of that kind myſelf, nor do I care to receive any.

Adieu. The trueſt and moſt affectionate of your humble ſervants would gain much by your having no lovers; for he would then be the firſt of your friends, in ſpite of an abſence that we may call eternal.

NINON.

I DARE ſay that Dulcinea never recollected her Chevalier with more pleaſure. Your letter was received as it deſerved; and the *ſorrowful countenance* (c) did not in the leaſt diminiſh the merit

(c) He uſed to ſign ſome of his letters to L'Enclos in his old age, The Knight of the ſorrowful Countenance; from a character in Don Quixote

merit of your ſentiments. I feel a ſolid pleaſure at their vigour and continuance—preſerve them, to the confuſion of dotage.

I agree with you that wrinkles are ſhrewd ſigns of wiſdom; and are pleaſed to find that your *exterior* merits have not lowered your ſpirits. I endeavour myſelf at the ſame philoſophy!

Adieu.

NINON.

I HAVE ſent an anſwer to your laſt letter to the Abbè du Bois' correſpondent; but he being at Verſailles, I am afraid that it was not delivered to him. I ſhould have been very uneaſy about your health, if I had not received a viſit from Madame de Bouillon's good little Librarian, who gave me extreme pleaſure by ſhewing me a letter concerning you, from a perſon who thinks of me, upon your account (d) Whatever reaſon I had in my ſickneſs, to be thankful to my friends and the world, I have met with nothing that affected me with a more lively ſenſe, than that mark of kindneſs. Do in this matter, all that you are obliged to, ſince it is owing merely to you that I have received this favour.

How do I envy thoſe who go to England! and how delighted ſhould I be to dine with you once more! Is there not ſomething groſs and mean in mentioning a dinner? The mind has great advantages over the body: however in return, this ſame vulgar mechaniſm often furniſhes certain reliſhes, that

(d) The Ducheſs of Mazarin, who lived then in England.

tha help t relieve the ſoul from uneaſy reflectr, ons. Yc have ſometimes laughed at thoſe I uſed to make: I have now baniſhed them all: 'tis too late for them at our period of life: we ought to content ourſelves with the day in which we live. Near hopes, whatever philoſophers may ſay, are as much to be prized, as thoſe that are farther extended—for they are more certain.

Here is fine morality for you! I wiſh you good health, for that is the point to which every thing ſhould tend. Adieu.

NINON.

THE Abbe du Bois delivered me your letter, and ſpoke as well of your appetite, as of your intellects There is a certain time of life, when we value a good ſtomach more than the underſtanding, and I confeſs to my ſhame, that I deem you happier in enjoying the one than the other. I always thought that your judgment would be as long-lived as yourſelf; but we cannot be ſo certain of the health of the body; without which there is nothing left but ſad reflections. I find myſelf inſenſibly falling into them, but I ſhall immediately turn to another ſubject.

It relates to a pretty young man, whom the deſire of ſeeing perſons of the beſt note in all countries, has tempted to break away from his family, without waiting for their conſent. Perhaps you may blame his too early curioſity; but the thing is done. He knows many things, and is ignorant of others that one of his age ought not to know. I thought him worthy of paying his reſpects to you, in order to make him ſenſible that he has hot

loſt

loſt his time by going to England. I have ſpo en likewiſe to his eldeſt brother, who is m particular friend, to direct him to wait on the Dutcheſs of Mazarin, and Lady Harvey ſince they have been pleaſed to remember me.

ST. EVREMOND.

YOUR letter has a great deal of good ſenſe in it. You praiſe the ſtomach to ſo much advantage, that henceforth it will be a ſhame to have a good underſtanding, without a good appetite at the ſame time. I am obliged to the Abbe du Bois, for having gained me your eſteem, by this favourable character. At eighty-eight years of age I eat oyſters every morning; I dine heartily, and ſup tolerably.—Heroes have been celebrated for leſs merit than mine.

When I was young, I admired nothing but the pleaſures of the mind; being more indifferent about the concerns of the body, than I ought to have been. Now, I make amends as much as poſſible, for my former partiality, either by the indulgences I give, or the eſteem and friendſhip I have lately conceived for it.

Your method was quite the reverſe; you had ſome concern for the body, in your youth: at preſent, you are occupied only about what relates to the mind. I know not whether you have reaſon to value it ſo much as you do. For my part. I can ſcarce read any thing worth retaining, and hardly hear any thing worth liſtening to. How difficult ſoever the intellects are at my age, the impreſſions that agreeable objects make upon my ſenſes, affect me ſtill: and we are much in the wrong to take

tabo ſuch r ains to mortify them. It is perhaps a jealouſy of the mind, that looks upon their lot to be better than its own.

Monſieur Bernier, who was the prettieſt philoſopher I ever knew, (*pretty philoſopher* is an odd expreiſion, but his figure, his ſtature, his manner and converſation, gave him a juſt title to this epithet) Monſieur Bernier, I ſay, ſpeaking of the mortification of the ſenſes, ſaid to me one day, "I will "let you into a ſecret, with which I would not "intruſt Madame de la Sablierre, nor even Ma- "demoiſelle de l'Enclos, whom I take to be of a "ſuperior kind; but I tell it to you in confidence, "that *abſtinence from pleaſure appears to me to be* "*agreat ſin.*" (e) I wasſurprized at the novelty of this ſyſtem. It left, however, ſome impreſſion upon me. If he had continued his lecture, perhaps he might have given me a thorough taſte for his doctrine.

Continue your friendſhip to me; which has never been impaired. A rare thing in ſo long a commerce as ours.

Adieu.

NINON.

(e) This pretty philoſopher ſpeaks on the epicurean principle; or rather, like a libertine, without any principle at all, as his doctrine is quite repugnant to the orthodoxy of his own church, which enjoins faſts, penances and mortifications. Had he admitted an exception againſt evil pleaſures, his ſentiment would not only have been more philoſophic, but agreeable alſo to the moſt rational chriſtianity.

The bleſſings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not caſt away;
For God is paid, when man receives;
T' enjoy, is to obey. *Pope's Univ. Prayer.*

NINON.

THE Count de Ch rembaut gave me a ſenſible pleaſure by telling me that you remember me, which I really deſerve, on account of my conſtant affection for you. We two ſhall merit the admiration of poſterity for the duration of our lives and that of our friendſhip. I fancy I ſhall live as long as you, but am often weary with doing continually the ſame thing; and I commend the Swiſs, who drowned himſelf for that ſingle reaſon.

My friends ſometimes check me on this ſcore; and aſſure me that life is deſireable while it is attended with tranquility and a ſound mind. Vigour of body gives us other ſentiments, one would prefer that to vigour of mind; but what ſignifies it when one cannot make the exchange? and 'tis as good to avoid reflections as make thoſe which are of no uſe.

Lady Sandwich has given me a thouſand ſatisfactions in the happineſs I have of pleaſing her. I did not imagine that at my time of life, I could render myſelf an agreeable companion to a woman of her age. She has more wit than all the women in France, and more true merit too. She is going to leave us, which gives concern to every one who knows her here, but moſt particularly to me. Had you been here, we ſhould have made entertainments worthy of the antients.

The Count de Grammont is grown ſo young again, that I think him as lively as when he hated ſick people, and loved them when they had recovered their health. You have wedded me to the Dutcheſs of Mazarin; and I cannot hear of her welfare without pleaſure.

Love

Love me always. *Adieu.* But why don't we ſay, *I'd morrow?* We ought not to die without ſeeing one another.

NINO

WHAT a loſs have you ſuſtained! If were not to be loſt ourſelves, it would be impoſſible for us ever to be comforted. I heartily condole with you. You are deprived of an amiable friend, whoſe converſe ſupported your ſpirits in exile. How is ſuch a misfortune to be retrieved? The loſs of friends is a tax on age! Philoſophy muſt be your only reſource now! I am as much affected at her death, as if I had the honour of the Dutcheſs of Mazarin's acquaintance. She thought of me in my ſufferings; I was touched with that goodneſs; and her being ſo dear to you, made me love and eſteem her ſtill more.

There is no remedy for this misfortune; nor is there any againſt thoſe that happen to our own poor bodies. Take care of yours: your friends are rejoiced to ſee you ſo healthy—and ſo wiſe, for I reckon thoſe only wiſe, who know how to render themſelves happy.

I return you many thanks for the tea you were pleaſed to ſend me: The humour and gaiety of your letter pleaſed me ſtill more than the preſent.

You will ſoon have Lady Sandwich with you again, whom we behold with great regret juſt on on the eve of her departure. (a) I wiſh that her way of life may afford you ſome conſolation. I don't

(a) She died lately in France in a very advanced age

don't know the Engliſh manner, but this lady has been perfectly French among us.

Adieu Sir, a thouſand times. If one could think like Madame de Chevreuſe, who fancied when ſhe was dying, that *ſhe was going to chat with her friends in the other world*, one might receive ſome comfort from ſuch a thought.

NINON.

YOUR letter has filled my mind with impoſſible wiſhes which I did not think myſelf any longer capable of. "The days paſs away," as good Des Yvetaux uſed to ſay, "in ignorance "and idleneſs; yet unhappily, theſe ſame days "are imputed to account, and ſwallow up both "the perſons and things that we are moſt attached "to." You have experienced this laſt particular in a ſevere manner. You formerly ſaid, *that I ſhould die of nothing but reflections*. I endeavour to avoid making any more, and to forget to-morrow the time I have lived to-day. Every one tells me that I have leſs reaſon to complain of time than any body, but be this as it may, if any body had propoſed ſuch a life to me formerly, I ſhould have hanged myſelf firſt. Yet we cling to an ugly body as much as to an handſome one: We love to feel eaſe and reſt. (g)

I have

(g) Behold the miſerable condition of old age! Tired to ſtay, yet loth to go! With ſenſe, wit, philoſophy, beauty, admiration, lovers, friends, health and fortune, if the happy Ninon de l Enclos was reduced to ſuch a ſtate, what a wtetchedheſs muſt it be to all the reſt of the world, to ſurvive to her years! No patience, but that of a chriſtian, can be ſufficient to

ſupport

I have ſtill a pretty good appetite: I wiſh heartily that I had an opportunity of trying it with yours, and of talking about all the original characters we have known; the remembrance of whom rejoiceth me more than the preſence of a great many people that I every day converſe with.

Monſieur de Clerembaut often aſks me whether he reſembles his father as to his parts? I tell him, No—But I hope from his ſelf-ſufficience, that he accepts this negative in his favour: and perhaps, ſome people may think ſo. What compariſon between this age, and that we have ſeen?

You will ſoon ſee Lady Sandwich; but I am afraid that ſhe goes into the country. She knows all that you think of her. She will tell you more news of the country than I can do. She has examined and ſounded every thing to the bottom. She perfectly knows all my haunts; and has found the way not to be a ſtranger here. Adieu.

ST. EVREMOND.

THE laſt letter I receive from Madame de l'Enclos always appears to me the beſt; and this is not becauſe the ſenſe of the preſent pleaſure prevails over the remembrance of the paſt; but the true reaſon is, that your mind receives new vigour and improvement every day. If it be with your

ſupport the wearied ſoul through ſuch an unvaried journey. And can any thing ſhew the peculiar excellence, the divine temperament of our religion, more than this, that while it makes us moſt wiſh to go, leaves us beſt contented to ſtay?

your health as with your underſtandiſig, I ſhall but ill maintain the challenge you pr poſe, on the beſt appetite. I made trial of mine againſt Lady Sandwich at an entertainment the other day at Lord Jerſey's, and was not worſted. Her Ladyſhip's wit is acknowledged by all the world, and her good taſte is manifeſt by the extraordinary eſteem ſhe expreſſes for you. She did not get the better of me in praiſing you, any more than in eating.

You are of all countries; as much eſteemed at London, as at Paris. You are of all times; and when I alledge you for the honour of mine, the young immediately name you to give the ſame advantage to theirs. Thus are you miſtreſs both of the paſt and preſent: I wiſh with all my ſoul, that you may yet extend your power conſiderably over the future! It is not fame I have here in view; that is ſufficiently ſecured to you already: I am thinking of what is more eſſential, namely life; of which eight days are more worth than eight centuries of glory after death.

" If any one had propoſed ſuch a life to you " formerly, you would have hanged yourſelf " firſt." This expreſſion charms me—And yet, you content yourſelf with *eaſe and reſt*, after having taſted the moſt lively pleaſures. There is not any one who ſets a greater value on youth than I; and as I have nothing of it but the remembrance only, I follow your example, and make the moſt of the current minutes that I can. Would to Heaven that the Dutcheſs of Mazarin had been of our mind! She would then have been ſtill alive. But ſhe would needs die to the greateſt beauty in the world (h).

Live

(h) She uſed coſmetics laterally, which deſtroyed her health.

Live———For life is good, while it is free from pain. Farewel.

NINON.

WIT is a dangerous talent in friendſhip. Your letter would have undone anyone but myſelf. I know your lively and ſurpriſing imagination, and yet was obliged to recollect that Lucian had written in praiſe of a fly, in order to render youi ſtile familiar to me. Would to Heaven that you really thought of me as you ſpeak! I ſhould then diſpenſe with *all nations*. For 'tis to your merit that the honour of that compliment more juſtly belongs.

Your letter is a maſter-piece. It has been the ſubject of all the converſations held at my apartments, this month paſt. You retrieve your youth again—You do well to love it. Philoſophy and wit agree perfectly well together: what ſignifies wiſdom if it does not allure? I am certain that you muſt ever pleaſe, while you preſerve the ſame turn of mind and ſentiment you poſſeſs at preſent.

Few people are able to reſiſt old age; but I fancy that I am not yet ſunk under the weight of it. I could wiſh with you that the Dutcheſs of Mazarin had regarded life in itſelf, without thinking of he face, which would have been lovely to the laſt, though good ſenſe had taken the place of ſome few charms.

Lady Sandwich will always preſerve the ſpirit of her wit, when ſhe loſes her youth; at leaſt, this is my opinion. When you ſee her, pray make her remember me, for it would give me concern to be forgotten by her. Adieu.

ST. EVREMOND.

I RECEIVED a letter from you in the month of December that was dated the fourteenth of October. 'Tis ſomewhat ſtale for a letter, but good things are welcome though ever ſo late. You write gravely, and yet you charm: You render Seneca agreeable, which is a new character for him: You ſpeak of your age, with all the ſpirit of youth (a).

I have one curioſity which you can ſatisfy me about. Prithee, when you reflect upon your younger days, does not the remembrance of times paſt, occaſion certain ſentiments to ariſe, equally diſtant from the languor of indolence, and the ſtrength of paſſion? Pray now, don't you feel in your heart, a ſecret oppoſition to that tranquil apathy, that you had flattered yourſelf you had calmed your mind into? For, to love, and be beloved, is a charming ſympathy, which has blended itſelf in your breaſt, even with your very reaſon. To ſtop the current of amorous affections one muſt interrupt the courſe of our days; for its only end is that of life.

Would to Heaven the fates may ſtill continue to you thirty years more, of love and philoſophy—This is what I pray for, on this firſt of the year 1701. A day on which thoſe who have nothing better to beſtow, make a new year's gift of their good wiſhes. Adieu.

THE

(a) Seneca wrote a treatiſe on old age.

THE TRANSLATOR

To the READER.

HERE ends the correſpondence between that charming old couple, St. Evremond and Madame de l'Enclos. We may perceive from many hints in theſe letters, that ſeveral have been loſt, on both ſides; which I dare ſay the reader of any taſte, muſt join with me in regretting.

There is a gaiety and ſpirit in theſe writings, that would render the youngeſt perſons amiable; but to meet with all the chearfulneſs of youth, joined to the ſenſe and judgment of maturity, without the leaſt ſymptom of that weakneſs of mind, or decay of underſtanding, which generally attend that ſtage of life, that is therefore ſtyled the years of *dotage*, muſt not only ſurprize, but render theſe extraordinary perſons famous to all poſterity (b).

Theſe writings muſt equally pleaſe all ages. Here the young and gay may rejoice in the higheſt ſpirit of wit and gallantry; and the old triumph at

(b) St. Evremond was near ninety years, and l'Enclos above fourſcore, when moſt of theſe letters were written.

at inſtances exempt from the uſual, but deſpicable effects of ſeneſcence. May theſe excellent examples ſerve to rouſe up the ſupineneſs of all who are *declining in the vale of years*, and inſpirit them to exert ſome effort to preſerve their intellectual faculties from a lethargy! For I am convinced that dotage, though the uſual, is not a neceſſary effect of age. But the mind grows indolent about the middle ſtage of life; and then the exerciſe of reading and reflection, which is requiſite to prevent our ſenſe and apprehenſion from ſtagnating, becomes too great a labour to us, unleſs an happy and more early habit ſhould have rendered it eaſy and familiar.

One may well imagine that I could not reſt ſatisfied here, or acquieſce in an opinion that there had not been any memoirs of ſo remarkable a woman, preſerved in ſome of the French tracts of the laſt age, except what are contained in theſe letters. Beſides the anecdotes that I quoted from The WORLD, hinted to me ſomething further, but left me ſtill at a loſs how to direct my inquiry; when a friend of mine procured me an entertaining collection of detached pieces, lately publiſhed in France, under the title of Le Petit Reſervoit, where I met with the following memoirs of this famous perſonage; which will afford a very high entertainment to the Engliſh reader, even through a tranſlation.

The French writer begins with the following prefatory letter, addreſſed to a lady.

" You have required from me, moſt amiable Eugenia, the hiſtory of Madame de l'Enclos, and I have been too haſty in promiſing it to you: for the ſearches I have made to ſatisfy your curioſity, have not been as ſucceſsful as I could wiſh; and I cannot ſupply you with any thing more than

a ſlight and imperfect ſketch of her character and memoirs. As for the reſt, you are not to expect in the courſe of her life, a number of intereſted events, which are produced by the paſſions when they are obliged to oppoſe the veil of myſtery to the yoke of importunity and reſtraint (c). Nor will you here meet with either the ſubtleties of coquetry, the artifices of infidelity, or the heinouſneſs of perfidy. Love, liberty, and philoſophy, in her walked hand and hand. She had a noble ſoul, but it had at the ſame time, a ſenſibility which forced her to yield to the lively expreſſions of her taſtes and appetites; and ſhe had the addreſs of joining with a certain air of congruity, the moſt gallant conduct with the moſt worthy principles. She was a faithful friend, whoſe virtue was guided by reaſon, and whoſe heart neither knew infidelity or deceit.

However, notwithſtanding theſe rare and eſtimable qualities, few people at preſent, acknowledge or agree about her merit. Her worth by degrees begins to be forgotten, her foibles only diſcourſed of or remembered. The young look her as a perſon of great affectation, the woman as one without morals, and the reſt of the world as a finiſhed picture of prejudice and enthuſiaſm (d).

But you, my fair Eugenia, who are bleſſed with ſenſe and judgment, at an age when other women poſſeſs

(c) This paſſage is forced and obſcure. It alludes I ſuppoſe, to romances, where the heroines are obliged to conceal their affections from the importunity of their lovers, and their actions from the reſtraint of the guardians. In his next paragraph he takes in Novel, "Nor will you here, &c.

(d) Nothing can be ſo abſurd as the firſt and laſt of theſe opinions about her character, as neither of them can

poſſeſs nothing more than beauty: you that judge nothing but yourſelf with ſecurity, will, I dare ſay, render juſtice to her character. You madam, will acknowlodge her to be what, in reality ſhe was; the moſt amiable of her ſex; and will not be ſurprized, that with a ſuperior genius, an undecaying beauty, and many other extraordinary qualities, ſhe ſhould have been the delight of ſociety, and the admiration of the age ſhe lived in.

I am, Madam, &c."

can be ſupported by any paſſage in her life or writings. 'Tis ſaid that moſt people have two characters; but I believe Ninon is the firſt that ever had three. She certainly had two, like other people, only with this remarkable peculiarity, that ſhe deſerved them both; namely, a good one, and a bad one.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF NINON DE L'ENCLOS.

MAdemoiſelle de l'Enclos, who under the name of Ninon has rendered herſelf famous in the laſt age, by the charms of her wit as well as her perſon, was only child of Monſieur de l'Enclos, a gentleman of Touraine, and of Mademoiſelle de Raconis, his wife, a lady of Orleans. She was born in Paris, on the *Ides of May*, 1616, and was chriſtened Anne. (e)

Her father had ſerved in the army when he was a young man, about the latter end of Henry the fourth's, and the beginning of Lewis the thirteenth's reigns. Being remarked for one of the malecontents of his time, he was ſelected under this

(e) Which is Ninon, in French.

this character, by the famous Cardinal de Retz, among the number of his friends, and continued attached to his intereſt, during the remainder his life. Her mother was a great devotee, with a very narrow underſtanding.

Monſieur de l'Enclos, though a man of politics and faction, was a perſon of good ſenſe and literature; and among other talents, was a perfect maſter of muſic, and an extraordinary performer on the lute: which occaſioned the miſtake of thoſe who reported that Ninon was the daughter of a luteniſt. But her father, who loved her paſſionately, had the fondneſs to teach her himſelf on this inſtrument, and ſhe became a moſt perfect miſtreſs of it.

Her mother, who had a mind to make her a devotee, like herſelf, brought her every day to morning and evening prayers along with her; but the little Ninon always carried ſome entertaining book of hiſtory or poetry in her pocket, which ſhe uſed to read by ſtealth while ſhe was on her knees.

She loſt her parents when ſhe was very young: 'till which time ſhe was reared up by a father who doated on her, and a mother that thwarted her in every thing. A rare education to form a capricious conduct! But without entering into the particulars of her *firſt life*, it may be ſufficient to ſay that ſhe was ſo happily endowed by natu , .iat ſhe almoſt framed herſelf without aſſiſtance. She had an high eſteem for her father's underſtanding, and *too great* a deference for his opinions. But tho' the quickneſs of her apprehenſiona aoon made her perceive the foibles of her mother, this never took off in the leaſt from that reſpect and duty which became a child.

Her mother died when Ninon was but fourteen

years old, and her father ſurvived her only a year. So that at the tender and hazardous age of fifteen, ſhe became miſtreſs of herſelf and fortune. But, notwithſtanding her extreme youth, ſhe was found to have a manly ſenſe, without maſculine manners; was chearful without levity; had wit without pertneſs; a nice diſcernment, ſound judgment, and a delicate taſte.

Her ſtature was above the middle ſize; her perſon neither too plump or lean; well made, and finely proportioned: all together of an engaging figure; but fitter to bear examining, than to ſtrike at firſt ſight. She had a very fair ſmooth ſkin, with a remarkable freſhneſs in her complexion; her face a fine oval, her eyes large and hazle; her eye brows dark, and well ſeparated, with long eye-laſhes; her hair of a deep cheſnut colour; her noſe well made, but rather high; her lips vermilion, her chin plump, her mouth prettily faſhioned, and expreſſing an agreeable ſmile. She had a good forehead, fine teeth, and a neck beautifully turned. She had graceful arms, pretty hands, a ſtrait, genteel ſhape, and very handſome limbs.

She had a *well-bred voice* in (f) ſpeaking; an open countenance, but ſenſible, tender and engaging; a remarkable air of neatneſs and delicacy in her appearance, gaiety and ſweetneſs in her man ; a certain grace in every geſture; a ſoul fone y devoted to pleaſure; and a mind fraught at the ſame time with the moſt angelic virtues.

She had a warm, earneſt manner of expreſſion, which without ſtaying to convince, perſuaded one into

(f) There is ſomething, even in the tone of a voice which diſtinguiſhes a gentleman from a plebeian. A polite ear will readily catch it.

into her opinions. She had every addreſs of coquetry, with all the ſpirit of gallantry: her whole air was capable of inſpiring the warmeſt ſentiments; for ſhe was poſſeſſed of thoſe bewitching graces, that a deſire to charm can render fine woman miſtreſs of; and ſhe herſelf ſeemed to breathe the ſame paſſion with which ſhe inſpired her admirers.

As to the reſt, ſhe was violent, hurried away by her taſte and inclinations; eager and lively about the leaſt matters that affected herſelf; cold, careleſs, and indolent, where her heart was not intereſted; and pretty inſenſible to moſt things in which ſhe had herſelf not any concern. Such was the famous Ninon de l'Enclos. How many particulars may one pick up here, to palliate or excuſe her failings!

Her beauty, and other outward accompliſhments, (inconſiderable advantages in compariſon of her underſtanding and merit) occaſioned her to be ſought after, very young, to be obtained in marriage, and ſurrounded her with a croud of ſuitors: but, as ſhe had even then, a ſingular averſion to matrimony, and a ſpirit determined for liberty, ſhe could never be prevailed upon to think of fixing herſelf in ſuch a ſcheme of life.

Her father too, who had himſelf experienced ſome diſagreeable circumſtances in that ſtate, far from ſpeaking favourably to her with regard to conjugal connections, had often freely recommended to he to follow the plan of conduct whil ſhe afterwards purſued through the whole courſe of her life; and even on his death bed, calling her to him, ſpoke to her in the following terms.

"My dear daughter, you ſee that all which
"remains to me in theſe laſt moments, is only
the fruitleſs remembrance of pleaſures that now

" abandon me; the poſſeſſion of which has not
" been of any long continuance; and this is the
" chief hing that I have reaſon to complain of
" providence in. But alas! my repinings now
" are vain! You, my child, who have ſo many
" years to ſurvive me, profit yourſelf early of
" your precious time. *Be always leſs ſcrupulous*
" *about the number, than the choice of your plea-*
" *ſures*" (g)

Ninon quickly perceived a world of good ſenſe in an advice ſo very agreeable to her own inclination; and immediately prepared herſelf to follow his inſtructions. She lived alone but had a conſiderable number of acquaintance and friends, which every day increaſed, as ſhe had collected in herſelf the moſt engaging talents; for, beſides her wit, ſenſe and beauty, ſhe was perfect miſtreſs of muſic, played extremely well on the harpſichord, lute, the orbo and guitar. She had only a weak chamber voice, but ſung with an extreme fine taſte, and danced with moſt admirable grace.

She never ſacrificed much time at her toilet, but was always by ſo much the genteeler dreſſed, as ſhe appeared to neglect that article. She generally wore plain, but rich cloaths, and conformed conſtantly to the different modes of the times, and of her own age. She had a great vivacity in her manners, but a remarkable mildneſs of diſpoſition at the ſame time. She poſſeſſed the art of acquiring friends, and ſtill more of preſerving them. Though ſhe was light in her engagements, and inconſiderate in her amours, ſhe was extremely careful in the management of her fortune, and regular in the

(g) The French writer makes no manner of reflection upon this extraordinary paſſage, but I hope that the Engliſh reader is ſhocked at the whole paragraph.

the diſpoſition of her whole œconomy; the fund of which was about ten thouſand livres, life annuity; (h) of which ſhe always reſerved one year's income before hand, that ſhe might have it in her power to aſſiſt her friends upon any emergency.

She had few domeſtics; a waiting maid, a valet de chambre, a footman, coachman, and cook, compoſed her houſhold; but ſhe had the art of having herſelf well ſerved, always preſerved her port, and had a certain air of dignity in every thing ſhe did.

She might have juſtly ſaid, that ſhe had been her own preceptor, and was but very little indebted to any other perſon for the improvement of her taſte and underſtanding. Before ten years of age ſhe had read Montaigne and Charron; (a) and at fourteen was celebrated through Paris for her wit and ſenſe. She perfectly underſtood Spaniſh and Italian; had read with application, the beſt authors in either of theſe languages, and ſpoke them both with great eaſe. Hiſtorians, philoſophers, Poets antient and modern, even romances, nothing had eſcaped her reading. She had enriched her mind with all the beauties and treaſures of antiquity, to which ſhe had joined the flowers of modern erudition: and tho' ſhe had no knowledge of Greek or Latin, ſhe was an excellent critic in the beſt tranſlations of Vaugelas and Ablancourt. (b) She wrote as ſhe ſpoke, which was with

(h) About five hundred pounds a year.

(a) A French writer in morality, of high eſteem.

" Say ſage Montaigne, or yet more ſage Charron.
POPE.

(b) Are Greek and Latin more difficult to attain than French and Italian? No. How comes it to paſs

charming ingenuous ſimplicity, and always extempore. She had an elevation of mind, a greatneſs of ſoul, v ıſt delicacy in her ſentiments, and infinite grace in her manner of expreſſion.

She uſed to recount ſome of her adventures, and told a ſtory remarkably well; but ſeldom did it, becauſe ſhe hated to ſay the ſame thing twice. One day Mignard, the famous painter, lamented before her, that his daughter had a bad memory; *I wiſh you joy*, ſays ſhe, *for then ſhe cannot quote*. She was a great enemy to quotations, becauſe they are apt to tire the company, and in ſome ſort to humble them at the ſame time. Her knowledge was void of oſtentation, accompanied always with modeſty, and a polite regard to thoſe ſhe converſed with. She knew a great deal, but never affected to ſhew it.

What a difference between this charming woman, and the generality of the preſent triflers, of whom a pretty face comprehends their entire merit! endowed neither with character, ſentiment, or manners; whoſe higheſt employment is knotting, and vacation cards; without reading, or converſation, except what they pick up, like parrots, from one another: who, without the mean and dangerous aids of play, ſcandal, or gallantry, are quite incapable of ſupplying any one topic of ſocial converſe: who acquire nothing more by increaſe of years, but an addition of ridiculous

then, that women ſhall be reckoned ore learned for underſtanding the former than the la ter? That they ſhall be deemed more accompliſhed fc being perfectly verſed in one, and become ſubjects of i dicule for the leaſt ſmattering in the other? But the dead languages happe n to be ingroſſed by men; theſe are their ecunal privileges, and they are up in arms when we invade their provinces.

culous follies; and when their admirers, declining by degrees, at length forſake them, retire forlorn, to ſpleen, vapours, and repining praye .

" By acts of piety compound for evil,
" And yield to God the leavings of the Devil."

She lived in Parliament-ſtreet, behind the Palace royal, in a houſe that ſhe had purchaſed for life. It was ſmall, but extremely neat and convenient: it contained two apartments; in the firſt, was a very handſome, large drawing-room, where ſhe received her company; who uſed to aſſemble there about five in the evening, and break up at nine. This ſalon was adorned with the portraits of her principal friends, and their paintings done by the moſt eminent maſters. She placed her library and harpſichord here. At the farther end of the ſecond apartment, there was a ſmall room, more elegantly furniſhed than any other part of the houſe. The hiſtory of *Pſyche* was painted, *ul freſco*, on the ceiling; and all the pannels pourtrayed with the moſt gallant adventures of antient fable. None of the cruelties of love were here deſcribed; they were baniſhed, even in idea, from this free ſcene, where every thing ſeemed to breathe ſucceſsful paſſion.

It was here ſhe choſe uſually to ſit, and retire to, when her company happened to be ſmall, it was here ſhe kept her lute. She ſeldom playe but when ſhe did, one mignt imagine it to have been her ſole ocupation. Upon theſe occaſions one was made almoſt amends for the loſs of her converſation; us ſhe had the power to infuſe her very ſpirit into the inſtrument, and to draw from thence ſuch flattering ſounds, expreſſions, if I may ſo ſp ak, ſo ſenſible and tender, th t ſhe

ſeen cd

ſeemed to breathe her ſoul through the various tones of harmony, and her fingers might be ſaid to have uttered ſentiment. She had alſo a little country houſe at the Cordeliers, very pleſantly ſituated with regard to air, wood, and water; and in this retreat ſhe uſed to ſpend her ſummer months, and frequently the autumn one alſo.

Though Madame de l'Enclos had a ſoul naturally formed for gallantry, ſhe was neither coquetiſh or inconſtant. While her paſſion ſubſiſted, ſhe loved with ſincerity and fidelity; for ſhe was incapable of the leaſt deceit or diſingenuouſneſs: but, the moment that her liking ceaſed, which ſometimes happened at an inſtant when ſhe leaſt expected it, all commerce of this kind, with that party; was at an end for life.

As to the reſt of her character, ſhe was of an even temper, and moſt engaging converſe; an excellent friend, generous, diſintereſted, of great veracity, juſt, a ſtrict obſerver of her word, ſteady in ſociety, and of moſt remarkable honeſty (c).

Among

(c) There may appear ſome contradictions in this ſketch of her character, when compared to one or two features of it, drawn in the firſt part of theſe memoirs. She is there ſaid to have every addreſs of coquetry —cold, careleſs and indolent, where her heart was not intereſted——Here it is ſaid, ſhe was neither coquetiſh—that ſhe was diſintereſted.——But I do not think there need be any difficulty here. For, ſhe might have employed every addreſs of gallantry before ſhe had fixed her engagements: and love laid aſide all thoſe arts, while ſhe continued in it. She might alſo have been cold, careleſs and indolent where her heart was not intereſted, and yet diſintereſted, where ſhe had made her connections of friendſhip, love, &c.

Among her lovers was Monſieur de Gourville; (d) a man of refined ſenſe and gallantry, greatly eſteemed for his many good qualities, and cloſely attached to the Prince of Conde. If the year 1650, at the time of the civil war, ſtil d *La Fronde*, finding himſelf on the ſudden, proſcribed and obliged to quit the kingdom before he had time to adjuſt the œconomy of his affairs; he waited upon Madame de l'Enclos, the evening before his departure, and brought her twenty thouſand gold crowns, which he begged ſhe would keep ſafe for him 'till he might be at liberty to return. But, becauſe he did not think it prudent to inſtruſt his whole fortune into one hand, he depoſited the like ſum with Monſieur de - - - -, a man in thoſe days remarkable for the ſtrictneſs of his morals, for the ſway he bore over tender conſciences, and the extraordinary character he had in Paris, for his honeſty.

In about two months, Madame de l'Enclos, as was not unuſual, engaged in a new amour. Poor de Gourville received an account of it in his exile, and was extremely alarmed at the news: he lamented his imprudence frequently, in not having uſed the precaution of taking ſome acknowledgment for the depoſit, which it ſeems in both inſtances he had neglected: he had confided entirely in her fondneſs, and had but little dependence on

a wo

But if this does not entirely ſolve the difficulty, may refer to r (d) p. 49, where it is ſaid that moſt people have t o characters. And as theſe anecdotes have been col ected from different writers, we may rather be ſurprized to meet with ſo much congruity upon the y nole,

(d) T e ſame who has been mentioned ir ne of her letters to St. Evremond.

a woman of intrigue, that when her tender connections were diſſolved, her moral ties would remain unbroken. And this opinion continued to have ſuch an effect upon his mind, that when he had permiſſion to return, in about ſix months after, inſtead of calling upon Madame de l'Enclos, his only care was to go to Monſieur de ———, and demand the money he had given into his charge; and which he then deemed to be the ſum total of his unhappy fortunes. But, what a wretched ſituation did he find himſelf in, when this ſame *honeſt man*, notwithſtanding his great character for probity, had the impudent villainy abſolutely to deny the depoſit, and affirmed to his face, that he had never received one ſhilling in truſt for him!

Madam de l'Enclos having heard, ſome days after, of his arrival, and being ſurprized at his neglect, and the little impatience he had ſhewn to ſee her, ſent to reproach him for it. He waited upon her the next morning; and on her obſerving a ſettled melancholy in his countenance, and enquiring the cauſe of his chagrin, he reported to her the ſtory juſt now recited. "Sir, ſays ſhe, "I have met alſo with a great misfortune in your "abſcence, and muſt throw myſelf entirely on "your indulgence for forgiveneſs: I have loſt— "(here ſhe pauſed)——the liking I had for you: "But I have not loſt my memory. The twenthouſand gold crowns that you left to my care, remain untouched, in the ſame caſket "which you brought them in. y them away "with you directly; and, whenev r you afford "me the pleaſure of another vi.it, r member that "thoug n you have loſt a miſtreſs, yo have gained af end."

Every

Every one has heard of her affairs with the Marquis de la Chatres. He was in love with her to diſtraction; and in the very height of his paſſion received an order from court, to join the army immediately. They muſt be ſeparated from each other, perhaps for a long time——*a Love s age*, at leaſt! and he has to begin his journey the next day. He grew inconſolable, he fell into deſpair, he curſed his deſtiny: "What is honour, what "is duty! fame, wealth, or glory! what are ye "to Love!" The afflicted Ninon did every thing in her power to ſalm his love-ſick mind: but her careſſes, her vows, her proteſtations, with the moſt tender adieus, were not of the leaſt avail.

At length, finding that nothing could compoſe his diſtraction, ſhe be thought herſelf of giving him a note under her hand, in which ſhe promiſed and vowed, that during his abſence, nay during his life, ſhe would never love any man in the world but himſelf. La Chatres was a weak perſon, and this expedient appeared an admirable ſecurity to him. He was tranſported with joy, kiſſed the paper an hundred times, put it up carefully in his pocket-book, and parted from her the moſt contented and moſt aſſured man alive.

But—it was a fatality which ſhe could not reſiſt—the amorous Ninon before his return, had entered into a new engagement. The folly s extravagance of the *promiſſary note*, occu ſtrongly to her at that time, and when ſhe had a pointed her a ation, ſhe cried out, *To be ſure la Chatres h s a very reſponſible bond of mine.* Which expre ſion became afterwards a proverb at Paris; and ſhe uſed often to laugh at t herſelf, whenever it came into her head.

She

She had an amour alſo with the Marquis de Gerſey, by whom ſhe had that unfortunate ſon who killed himſelf for her. (e) She had afterwards an affair with the Marquis de Villarceaux, whom of all her lovers, was the perſon ſhe continued her conſtancy to for the longeſt time. Their connection laſted about five years, and might have ſubſiſted longer on her part, who was always the firſt to change, if the accident which ſhall be mentioned juſt now, had not interrupted their amour.

He was young, handſome, finely made, and had much the air of a perſon of quality. His figure was altogether graceful and engaging; and he had a great deal of wit, vivacity and ſpirit. But, with all theſe agreeable qualities he was the moſt irregular man in the word, in affairs of gallanty. His chief paſſion was women; but he was not very delicate in his choice; and often divided his addreſſes between the moſt lovely miſtreſs, and the moſt homely maid.

Beſides, which is extraordinary in ſo free and general a lover, but judging of women's hearts by his own, he was jealous to the laſt degree. He was ſometimes ſo uneaſy about Madam de l'Enclos, even while ſhe was at his own houſe in the country, where ſhe lived with him for three years, that he uſed to hide little boys under her bed at night, to watch if any rival was admitted when at any time he happened to be abſent.

[illegible] Abbe Scarron, a celebrated author, who was among the numbe[illegible] Madame de l'Enclos' friends,

(e) T'is ſtory has been alrea y tc d in the Introduction, The father is there ſtile the ount de Greze, as quo from The Wond n le P it Reſervoir, he is ca d the Marquis de Gerſey. But Lord Jerſey of gland was the perſon; the nam of whoſe family Villiers.

friends, threw aſide the gown in the year 1651, and married Mademoiſelle d'Aubigne, (f) who was at that time, but ſixteen years old. Madame de l'Enclos ſoon became acquainted with her, and found her remarkably ſenſible and agreeable for a young woman of her age. In a little time ſhe contracted a ſtrict intimacy with her, and as Monſieur Scarron's fortunes, by his quitting the church, had been reduced very low, ſhe often lent her money, after the moſt generous manner, and ſhewed her in other things many inſtances of friendſhip when ſhe was under the greateſt difficulties.

However, Ninon ſoon had reaſon to repent her of this connection; for the lovely Scarron, who was above twenty years younger than herſelf, paid her back with a ſort of involuntary ingratitude, by alienating from her the heart of de Villarceaux, as was hinted above. Madame de l'Enclos was conſiderably piqued at firſt, and heartily repented the indiſcretion of making an intimate companion of a woman ſo much younger than herſelf. But, ſhe had a ſpirit in every thing—She was perſuaded of Madame Scarron's innocenſe, ſhe knew from her own experience, that lovers are not *perennials*. She ſoon became reconciled to her, and continued ever after one of the ſincereſt of her friends. And after the death of Monſieur Scarron, which happened in 1660, the ſympathy of their taſte and humours became ſtronger ties to co fonder union: ſo that for ſome time, they li intirely together filaring the ſame houſe and the ſame bed.

Madame S arro n, bein afterwards raiſed to the moſt ele· ted ſit uation of life, never forgot the many

(f) Aft wwards Madame Maintenon.

many inſtances of friendſhip from Madame de l'Enclos; and ſought frequent occaſions of ſhewing a becoming ſenſe of gratitude.

Madame de l'Enclos had a ſon by de Villarceaux, who was more fortunate than her former, but of a ſingular character. He was named de la Boiſſiere. But as the Count d'Etrèes immediately ſucceeded de Villarceaux, he uſed to claim this child as his own: and after ſeveral years diſpute upon this point, not being able to fix the dates of their reſpective claims, they one day agreed to throw dice, in order to determnie their pretenſions. The lot fell to the Count d'Etrees, who becoming afterwards mareſchal of France, and vice-admiral, put this adoption in the marine, and took care to advance his fortunes.

This Monſieur de la Boiſſere was reſident moſtly at Toulon; he was a very good officer, of remarkable bravery, and highly eſteemed in the navy. Muſic was his only amuſement, which he had an extraordinary paſſion for, though he did not underſtand it, nor was even acquainted with the notes. He had in his houſe a very large ſeparate apartment, which he dedicated to the God of Harmony, and was furniſhed with every kind of muſical inſtrument. Here he uſed to aſſemble all the performers that paſſed through Toulon, in their way to France, from Italy, or back again, and after regaling them plentifully with cham-

he would have a concert performed for

himſelf alone, and never deſired any other company. He died unmarried at Toulon in 1732, aged ſeventy-ſi

The Marquis de Sevigne ( ) paid his addreſſes to her when ſhe was much advanced in years; but

ſhe

(g) to Madame de Sevigne, of whom we have a collection of letters, to her daughter, the are much eſteemed.

ſhe declined them. She was not to be won but where ſhe particularly liked; and ſhe had no clever opinion of him. She uſed to ſay, that he had the ſimplicity of a dove, a ſoul of panado, a body of wet paper, and a heart of orange gourd ſouſed in ſnow: in ſhort, a man beyond all manner of deſcription. She had formerly endeavoured to put a little life and ſpirit into him, by a correſpondence ſhe entered into with him on the ſubject of gallantry. Her letters indeed, are allowed to be *Chef d'Oeuvres*, for wit and ſentiment by the concurrent applauſe of all the ingenious writers ſince her time: but his, have not been tranſmitted to us, as not being deemed worthy of the preſs. Nor are they at all neceſſary to illuſtrate hers, as ſhe moſtly quotes thoſe paſſages from them which her own refers to. (h)

Madame de l'Enclos was paſt ſixty years of age, when the famous John Bannier, nearly related to the kings of Sweden, threw himſelf at her feet. This was the perſon who was afterwards killed in a duel at London, by Prince Philip of Savoy, in 1686.

But the laſt of her lovers upon record, and the moſt extraordinary of her gallant adventures was the ſtory of the Abbe Gedoine, which is perhaps the moſt ſingular thing of this kind, that ever was remembered. (a) The amour between them continued about a year. He went into Orleans at that time, which ſhe did not ſeem pleaſed

an

(h) Her letters ſhall follow in the courſe of this work, and will probably make the beſt part of the reader's entertainment her

(a) This ſtory has been already told in the World, and as it was quoted before in the Introduction this work, I ſhall not repeat it here.

and he ſtaid longer away than he had promiſed, at parting.

When he came to ſee her, on his return, "My "dear Abbe, ſaid ſhe, the ſhorteſt follies are the "beſt. I perceive, ſomewhat too late, that it "was an abſurd ſtep in me to accept of your addreſſes at this age of life. I would not carry on "the frolic farther. Let us fairly quit each "other this inſtant, and take leave for the reſt of "our lives."

Thus, after having at the age of fourſcore, inſpired a young man of twenty-five, with a real paſſion for her it was ſhe who quitted him, and made the firſt motion of breaking off. The Abbe was ſenſibly affected at this rupture; however he continued to viſit, to love and eſteem her, during the remainder of her life; but from that time had never the leaſt commerce with her, except as a friend.

She never drank any thing but water, though ſhe eat very heartily; and was ſo gay and lively during her meals, that people uſed to ſay, he ſoup had got into her head.

She loved every one ſhe eſteemed, ſhe uſed to ſay, but ingeniouſly confeſſed, that ſhe did not always eſteem thoſe ſhe loved.

When men, ſhe ſaid, once boaſt of their anceſtry, 'tis probable they have little elſe to be vain of: wits vaunt themſelves upon their talents because they imagine them to be ſingular. But perſons of good ſenſe are never proud of any thing. And though ſhe had during whole courſe of her life, been treated with the greateſt reſpect and complaiſance, by perſons of the higheſt rank; enough to have flattered the vanity of any other woman; it did not in the leaſt affect her. She knew well the value of ſuch ſort of things, and rated

rated them accordingly. And in reality, ſhe was neither inſolent, nor vain, nor envious: ſhe was however, naturally jealous of other women's merit, and this was her only foible.

Chriſtina, Queen of Sweden, who came to Paris in 1656, where ſhe remained for two years, was charmed with the converſation of Madame de l'Enclos, and declared at parting to the whole court, that ſhe had not met with any woman in France, whom ſhe liked or admired ſo much as the *illuſtrious Ninon*; which was her expreſſion.

Chriſtina loaded her with preſents and encomiums, and took all the pains in her power, to prevail on her to go with her to Rome. But, praiſes only render thoſe giddy, who are not much uſed to them.——They did not make Ninon vain. She returned her majeſty a great many thanks for the kind attachment ſhe had expreſſed towards her, but ſuffered her to travel away, without her.

She had but an indifferent opinion of mankind in general, and has ſaid that when ſin knocks with a purſe of gold at the door of indigence, it is very rarely refuſed admittance.

She had a great talent for reflections; and had ſhe ſpent her life in writing, inſtead of *living*,- we ſhould have been in poſſeſſion of one inſtance at leaſt, to prove modern wit equal to the moſt refined genius of antiquity. I ſhall here amuſe you with ſome more of her *thoughts upon various ſubjects*.

They are either to be pitied or condemned who are obliged to have recourſe to religion for the conduct of their live[illegible] 'Tis a ſign they have either a narrow ſoul or a corrupt heart

Large hands and a big belly are certain ſigns of ignobility.

Beauty without grace, is a hook without a bait.

Wri[illegible]tles

Wrinkles are better placed on the *heel* than the *forehead*.

We ſhould make proviſion for food, but never for pleaſure; which we ſhould catch extempore.

A woman ſhould never take a lover without the conſent of her heart; nor an huſband without the concurrence of her reaſon.

There is nothing in nature ſo various as the pleaſures of love; and yet they are always the ſame.

The poets were fools to furniſh Cupid with a torch, or bow and arrow; for the power of that deceit is owing intirely to his blindneſs.

Love deſtroys reflection; and reaſon in its turn, puts an end to love.

It requires infinitely a greater genius to make love, than to make war.

There are certain privileged ſouls, who are capable of finding in love itſelf, reaſons for ſtill loving on.

How unhappy are women! Their own ſex their moſt inveterate enemy. An huſband tyrannizes; a lover diſhonours and deſpiſes them. Watched on all ſides, thwarted in all things; ever in fear and in conſtraint; without ſupport or ſuccour; with a number of lovers, but not one friend. Is it then to be wondered at, that they ſhould become a compound of humour, diſſimulation and caprice?

He ſaid one day to Monſieur de St. Evremond, that he returned thanks every night to God, for the ſtrength of his mind, and prayed every morning to preſerve it from the weakneſs of her heart.

St. Evremond was the oldeſt of her friends: he had never been one of her lovers but was always enamoured of her wit, ſenſe, and taſte, and above all, of that philoſophic turn which ran through

through all her reflections, ſentiments, and conduct. He addreſſed a great many pieces to her, both in verſe and proſe, that may be found among his works; particularly, an excellent diſcourſe on the morals of Epicurus, which he dedicated to her, under the title of The modern Leontium; alluding to a lady of that name at Athens, famous for her gallantries and philoſophy, which ſhe ſtudied under Epicurus.

Madame de l'Enclos happened to yawn one day, at the reading of a tedious oration that the Abbe Tallemont had ſpoken upon his reception into the French Academy. St. Evremond, who was preſent, wrote a few extemporary lines, which turned upon this metaphor, that the *figures* of rhetoric are very inſipid after *thoſe* of Aretin.

Le Pere d'Orleans, a Jeſuit, author of the Revolutions of England, and many other writings, ſaid to her one day, on account of ſome articles of faith, which had ſtagnated her reaſon, and ſuſpended her belief; "Madam, while you are "waiting for conviction, make a ſacrifice of your "incredulity to God." Fontenelle to whom ſhe mentioned this particular, told it afterwards to Rouſſeau, who has made it the *point* of one of his epigrams.

A friend of hers came one day, to make her a confident of his paſſion, for one of the fineſt women at court. "Sir, ſaid ſhe, it muſt be by "the higheſt reſpect and aſſiduity, ovtrem "complaiſance, and conſtant homag , the "you can expect to inaie the great love "and admira , which your miſtreſs has "been already inſp red wit—for her own beau- "ty. Speak o he inceantly of her charms, "and but ſe'dom of your paſſion: for be a ured, "that ſhe s an hundred times more pleaſe with

the

" the lovelineſs of her own perſon, than ſhe can
" poſſibly be with all the beauty of your ſenti-
" ments. But, if ever ſhe ſhould ſurrender to
" your ſollicitations, remember, that in yielding
" up her heart, ſhe has depoſited in your hands,
" the whole happineſs of her life; that ſhe has
" intruſted you with your honour and repoſe;
" and hath thus rendered you the abſolute ſove-
" reign of her deſtiny. How few men are re-
" ſponſible for ſuch a confidence!"

Her principal friends were the Counteſs de la Suze, the Counteſs de'Olonne, the Marchioneſs de Caſtelnau, the Marchioneſs de la Ferte, the Dutcheſs de Sully, the Counteſs de Fieſque, Madame Fayete, Madame Scarron, Madame Choiſy, Madame de Sevigne, (b) Madame de Grignan her daughter, Madame du Tort, Madame de Colange, the Marchioneſs of Lambert, (c) the Dutcheſs de Bouillon Mancini, Lady Sandwich, and a number more of perſons of the beſt rank in France.

This famous woman died at ris, on the ſeventeenth of October 1706, aged ninety years and five months; mourned and regretted by all her friends and acquaintance. It is of her alone, that one might ſay with truth, that ſhe had preſerved the flowers of ſpring, even till the autumn was paſt; and that time, which defaces all things, flew ove her charms, *like an arrow in the air*, ithout leaving any trace of its paſſage behind.

The Abbe Chateauneuf wrote an epitaph for her

(b) The ſame lady that was men ioned note (g) p. 79.

(c) She was the author ſ ſeveral very ingenious tracts, which as well as Madame de Sev ne's letters, are moſt barbarouſly tranſlated into Engl ſh.

her, in verſe, which concludes with this character that ſhe had the charms of Venus, with the ſoul of an angel (d) He has alſo drawn her character at large, very finely; and I ſhall ſubjoin it here, for your further entertainment.

" As ſoon as any perſon became acquainted with Madame de l'Enclos, they immediately rendered juſtice both to her merit and her charms, and could not avoid crying out, in their minds, " What elegance! what beauty! graces that " dart through the ſoul! what have I been doing " all the reſt of my life, which I have ſuffered to " paſs away without having ſeen or known her?"

She always appeared to you the ſame at laſt, that ſhe did at firſt: and as ſhe ever preſerved the charms of her lively wit, her converſation was youthful at fourſcore; and ſhe attained even in her youth, that ſolidity of ſenſe and judgment which in her advanced years appeared to be the fruit of age and expe ience; ſo that many ſentiments and reflections of hers when ſhe was a very young woman, may be repeated now, to prove that ſhe was capable of *reaſoning* at an age when others are ſcarce capable of *thinking*. In a word, the ſtrength of her foreſight had joined the future to the preſent, under one view.

The age had often changed its taſte, during her *century*; and faſhion did not exert its empire leſs upon the ways of thinking than it did upon the modes of dreſs. However Madame de l'Enclo conformed herſelf ſucceſſively to the different manners, without being different from herſelf, and was always in the faſhion without copying any body. She ha her *own ſenſe*, and not that of the

(d) Here is a confuſion of theology. An unpardonable blunder in an Abbe.

times; and when one has the happineſs to be bleſt with true ſenſe in themſelves, they have the beſt ſenſe of all times. In fine, nothing but that equal mixture of ſolid and agreeable qualities which ſhe poſſeſſed could have preſerved that conſtant tenor of approbation and eſteem which ſhe ſo remarkably enjoyed, through the whole courſe of her life.

She never affected to appear knowing, but on the contrary, to claim all the privileges and immunities of ignorance; and though ſhe had both read and digeſted a great deal, ſhe ſeldom remembered what ſhe had read; but had a ſingular kind of recollection; which was, that whenever any hiſtorical fact, a verſe, or any other paſſage, happened to have a relation to whatever ſhe, or any body elſe was converſing about, they immediately occurred to her mind; and then became as it were her own, by the uſe or application ſhe made of the quotation or alluſion; and appeared quite new from the turn ſhe gave them.

If any ridiculous incident or whimſical adventure happened within her knowledge or obſervation, at any time of her life, ſhe never forgot the leaſt particular of them that was entertaining. And, with what ſpirit and humour would ſhe relate them! What would be but a ſimple tale from the recital of another, became from her deſcription, a perfect ſcene. The very action itſelf; both fron the juſtneſs of the characters, and the xactneſs and brevity of the ſtory, in which one could find nothing to add, or to diminiſh.

Moliere mentioned to me a circu nſtance relating to her, a few days before he exhibited his Tartuffe (e) to the public. We were in company together,

(e) Our play of the Non Juror is taken from this piece.

together, where the converſation happened to turn upon the ſubject of mimickry; and a perſon aſked him the reaſon, why the ſame ridicule that had eſcaped us in the original character, ſhould afterwards ſtrike us ſo ſtrongly in the copy? He anſwered that it was becauſe we perceived it then, by the eyes of the mimic, which were quicker than our own. For added he, *the talent of ſeeing with ones own eyes, is not given to every body.*

Upon which occaſion, he mentioned Madame de l'Enclos to us, as the perſon in the world, upon which a ridiculous character made the quickeſt and moſt lively impreſſion. He told us that he had read his Tartuffe to her ſome time before; for he uſed always to conſult her upon every piece he writ; as indeed did all the wits of her age; but ſhe paid him back his entertainment, by relating an adventure which ſhe had formerly, with an hypocrite of the ſame kind; whom ſhe deſcribed in ſo ſtrong and *picturesque* a manner, that he aſſured us if he had not finiſhed his play, he would never have attempted it as he would have deſpaired of being able to produce a character on the ſtage, ſo highly drawn as the Tartuffe of Madame de l'Enclos.

As ſhe was ſo quickly ſtruck with the abſurd part of characters, it was not ſurprizing that ſhe was capable of deſcribing them ſo well but, it muſt ſtill be matter of wonder that ſo dangerous a talent ſhould never happen to be the cauſe of her loſing any one friend. People were always diſpoſed to accept any thing in good part, from a perſon who never ſpared any thing that was amiſs in herſelf; and who was always the firſt to correct in her own behaviour, whatever gave offenſe in another's. She was beſides ſo much above envy or ill nature, ſhe had given ſo many proofs of the generous and humane diſpoſition of her heart, and

her friendſhip was ſo eſtimable, that her railleries were rather accepted as admonitions, than reſented as reproaches.

The firſt thing that Madame de l'Enclos made of reaſon, was to free the mind from common prejudices: She very early began to apprehend that both men and women were ſubject equally, to the ſame moral: (f) according to which maxim, which ſhe made the rule of her conduct, through the courſe of her life, ſhe could never be induced either from cuſtom or example, to indulge herſelf in falſhood, ill nature, ſcandal, envy, or any of theſe worthleſs qualities, which tho' common to women, do nevertheleſs diſhonour their characters, and offend againſt the rights of civil ſociety (g).

But this principle which made her judge of the human paſſions and foibles according to what they are in themſelves, independent of gender, made her condemn them with an equal ſeverity in both ſexes; for which reaſon, ſhe abhorred that unjuſt and tyrannical cuſtom in men, of arrogating to themſelves a vain triumph upon that *adventure* to which

(f) Madame de l'Enclos is perfectly right in her maxim; for there certainly is no ſuch diſtinction in religion as *a male and female ſcripture*: but ſhe is dangerouſly wrong in the inference ſhe ſeems to have drawn from it; for the reaſoning on this head ſhould be to *reſtrain* men, not *to ſet woman free.*

(g) The Abbe de Chateauneuf has deſcended here to a very mean and unfair common place ſarcaſm. The worthleſs qualities he attributes to us are no more peculiar to women than to men; they are vices common to all weak, baſe or uneducated minds, whether male or female; and are as frequently to be met with in their ſex as ours; but with the addition of ſome greater and more ungenerous crimes, on their part.

which they affix infamy in women: arbitrarily, and contrary to all ſenſe and moral, reducing their virtue to a ſingle point. As if integrity of life and manners, which comprehends the whole, was abſolutely interdicted to them. A prejudice not only falſe in its principle, but ſo much the more dangerous, as it has often been productive of the moſt ſhocking misfortunes of their lives: for, having once happened to fail in what they have been taught to deem their principle, nay almoſt ſole obligation, they are apt, too haſtily, generally to conclude, that they have no other duty to regard; at leaſt, the world does ſo for them; and become therefore, careleſs about every thing elſe.

"She ſets, like ſtars which fall, to riſe no more."

This gave occaſion to the Duke de Rochefaucault, to enter it down among his collection of maxims, that *the leaſt fault in a frail woman, was her frailty*. By which is meant, that as the world is at preſent conſtituted, with regard to this particular, it is more regular and perhaps more difficult, to ſtop at that ſingle weakneſs, than even to get the better of it.

But, if Madame de l'Enclos declared war againſt ſo dangerous a prejudice, which by making an amour the higheſt crime of women, ſeemed to leave them at liberty to abandon themſelves to every other; ſhe equally oppoſed the romantic error of thoſe, who under the title of a *noble paſſion*, would elevate love to the dignity of a virtue. She conſidered it, as it really is, a tranſitory taſte, founded intirely on the illuſion of the ſenſes, an inconſiderate affection, tho' a bewitching one, which by its peculiar charms, ſoftens all the cares, and ſweetens the bitterneſs of life, and which alone is

capable of filling up all thoſe craving voids that every other paſſion leaves aching in our breaſts. However, a caprice only, or fortuitous ſenſation; the continuance of which depends neither upon ourſelves or others: ſubject to inconſtancy, to diſguſt, and frequently to repentance.

Upon the whole, ſhe uſed to ſum up her philoſophy on this head, with concluding that as this paſſion takes its riſe meerly from an accidental turn of mind, or a critical diſpoſition of humours, it did not denote the leaſt merit in the beloved object, and was therefore, no manner of compliment to it. Conſequently, had no ſpring to raiſe our vanity, nor any right to exact return.

But her notions of friendſhip were quite contrary to theſe. She beſtowed all her confidence and eſteem upon this high-prized connection. This, ſhe acknowledged to be a noble, liberal and elevated paſſion; in which generous commerce ſhe would not admit the leaſt infidelity, inconſtancy, or reſerve; and would often declare to her lovers, that they had no rivals ſo much to be jealous of, as her friends

To conclude; this charming and extraordinary woman has ſhewn the world, that a delicacy and a moral may be preſerved even in libertiniſm. She extended the career of gallantry beyond all former precedents; and continued to be the object of admiration, deſire, and eſteem, for almoſt a century and both her lovers and her friends were perſons of the higheſt rank or ſtation in France. But, ſhe never engaged in any one amour upon this conſideration; her gallantries were all diſintereſted; for ſhe thought that there were in love itſelf, ſufficient reaſons for loving. She never permitted her lovers any ſort of liberality; and was ſo nice in this particular, as to refuſe even the

the ſmalleſt preſent, which ſhe would perhaps, have made no ſcruple of acccepting from the hands of another.

She liked however, to have her lovers generous in themſelves, though ſhe herſelf declined any advantage from it; as ſhe eſteemed it the character of a great and liberal ſoul. The generoſity of true lovers, ſhe uſed to ſay, is only an ingenious attention, dictated by a noble and delicate ſenſation, which is fond, by little aſſiduities, to entertain the graces of love, without alarming its pleaſures. (h)

She was herſelf naturally generous; ſhe loved to give, and did it always with moſt admirable grace; for ſhe ſhewed a *pleaſure* not a *pride* in giving. Her pride was better ſhewn in refuſing

(h) This paſſage is very ingeniouſly and delicately imagined and expreſſed; though the ſenſe of it is not obvious enough to every apprehenſion. I will give the original words, that the reader may pick his own ſenſe out of them. *La generoſite des vrais amans, diſoitelle, n'eſt autre choſe qu'une attention ingenieuſe dictee par une ſenſation noble & delicate, qui ſe plait a entretenir, par des petis ſoins, les graces de l amour, ſans alarmer ſes plaiſirs.*

What I take Ninon to have intended here, was to point out that fine addreſs with which a polite lover ſhould behave toward his miſtreſs, for fear of offending againſt a certain delicacy of Sentiment, peculiar to generous minds. Swift gives a definition of a preſent to a ſuperior, in which li b a miſtreſs is always to be conſidered; ſomething of ſmall value, but not eaſily to be had for money. A gallant lover ſhould ever attend to this nice point, leſt his gifts ſhould aſſume the air of bribes inſtead of preſents.

the gifts of others; and when thoſe who had been the lovers of her youth, attempted to make her conſiderable preſents when age had diminiſhed her charms, and impaired her health, and her charities had ſtreightened her fortunes, ſhe was more affected with the nobleneſs of their ſentiments, than the liberality of their gifts; and ſhe always returned them on the inſtant; as her ſpirit was above receiving any thing from the hands of love, or even thoſe of friendſhip.

People who ſaw Madame de l'Enclos for the firſt time, toward the latter end of her life, were ſurprized at the appearance of that grave mien, and reſpectable countenance, where ſenſe and philoſophy alone ſeemed to have taken their ſeat. They confeſſed that they ſought in vain for thoſe beauties which they had formed ſo agreeable an idea of; and that they could ſcarcely perceive any traces of that charming Ninon whom the world had formerly been ſo much enamoured of. But, notwithſtanding her great age, if one examined her eyes, they would perfectly agree with the Abbe Gedoine, who ſaid, "That one might in "them, even at ninety, read the hole hiſtory "of her life." What effects then muſt they have been capable of producing, when enlivened with all the fire and ſpirit of youth! when accompanied with a lively and ſmooth complexion, a perſon of dignity and eaſe, with a grace in all her movements, and particularly in dancing, which no woman ever equalled!

One may well conclude, that all theſe beauties, animated with a mind and ſoul like hers, muſt have been perfectly capable of engaging all hearts. In fine, one cannot too often repeat what has been ſo many times ſaid of her before, "That "ſhe had joined all the virtues of our ſex to the charms

" charms of her own; in ſpite of which gender
" ſhe had raiſed herſelf to the rank of the moſt
" illuſtrious men." (a)

Toward the latter end of her life, her houſe was become the reſort of all the worthy and polite of both ſexes in the kingdom; as alſo of the moſt learned or diſtinguiſhed perſons in the republic of letters Her apartments were eſteemed the center of good company; and the moſt ſtrict and virtuous parents uſed what addreſs they could, when their ſons began to enter into the world, to gain them the advantages of being admitted into ſo improving and reſpectable a ſociety. But high birth or the ſtrongeſt recommendations, were often vain pretenſions; for it required a great deal of real merit, beſides a long ſolicitation, before any one could arrive at that honour.

The Abbe Fraquiere told me a particular once, that may be mentioned very properly in this place. She had complained to him in a jeſting way, of her having made one bad *purchaſe*, as ſhe termed it, on the opinion of her friends, and was moſt ſtupidly over-reached by their inſtances. It was with regard to Monſieur Remonde, nicknamed the *Greek*, becauſe he was well ſkilled in that language, and had built a houſe upon a Grecian model, that was uninhabitable. She uſed to ſay of him, " I have many things to be diſpleaſed at
" with myſelf, but there is one that has mortifi-
" ed me more than all the reſt: I have *bought*
" Rémonde, and found out too late, that he will
" never *quit coſt*.

He had been introduced into her ſociety, at the reiterated requeſt of ſome of his friends, who al-

(a) Here is another impertinence thrown out by the Abbe againſt our ſex.

ways ſpoke of him as an accompliſhed perſon. But, after the firſt impoſition was over, and that ſhe began to open her eyes upon ſo much boaſted merit, ſhe declared that ſhe had been made the dupe of his *Greek erudition*; lamented the time ſhe had thrown away in endeavouring to poliſh his manners; and in fine, declared him baniſhed from her porch, becauſe all his ſenſe and philoſophy appeared to be *left handed*. (b).

Thus far the Abbé Chateauneuf; to which I ſhall add an extract from the Abbé de la Fare, and then conclude.

" I did not know Madame de l'Enclos, ſays he, in the prime of her *firſt* beauty; but at fifty years of age, nay after ſeventy, ſhe had lovers fond of her to adoration; and perſons of the firſt quality in France were her moſt affectionate friends. For my own part, I do affirm, that I never knew any woman in my life ſo perfectly worthy of eſteem, nor whoſe loſs has been ſo deſervedly lamented.

" She aſſembled about her people of the beſt ſenſe and talents, who were collected together by the charms of her converſation, and politeneſs of her manners; and her houſe, even in the laſt ſtage of her life, was perhaps, the only one in Paris, where perſons might enjoy a liberal converſe of wit and letters, and where one could paſs away whole winter evenings, without wearineſs, ſcandal, or play.

" At

(b) I have read Plato, *in Engliſh*; and there is a paſſage quoted from Homer, out of one of his works that is loſt, pretty much the ſame with this ſarcaſm of Ninon's. It is thus tranſlated in proſe; *He knew many things, but knew them all amiſs.*

"At the age of ninety, her company was ſtill ſought after, by the youngeſt perſons of gaiety, taſte and ſentiment: for to a ſoul naturally formed for agreeableneſs, and which had never ſacrificed but to *the graces*, ſhe had joined a moſt admirable judgment, inſpired by the moſt lively imagination; and to an extreme age preſerved ſuch an air of youth and beauty, that the Abbé Chaulieu uſed to ſay, *Cupid had retreated even into the wrinkles of her forehead.*

"When ſhe found herſelf drawing near her end, ſhe frequented her pariſh church as often as her health would permit as indeed ſhe uſed to do, all her life: ſhe made a *general confeſſion*, and received the ſacrament on her death-bed with all the ſentiments of an unfeigned piety. She died with all her ſenſes perfect, and even with the ſame livelineſs of wit, for which ſhe was ſo remarkable during her whole life."

I have here, moſt fair Eugenia, collected for your entertainment, every thing I could learn, either of the life or character of this moſt charming and extraordinary woman; which I have copied from the anecdotes ſupplied to me by Monſieur de Fontenelle, the Abbé Fraquiere, Abbé Gedoine, Chateauneuf, La Fare, &c. who were her intimate friends.

I give you my memoirs, and my authorities, and am, Madam, with admiration and reſpect,

Your, &c.

THE

TRANSLATOR.

To the READER.

I Have given you here the Memoirs and Character of Madame de l'Enclos, as well as I could pick them up, out of the ſeveral detached pieces which are collected in the *Petit Reſervoir*: I had a good deal of difficulty to frame a conſiſtent ſtory and deſcription of her from the various accounts of different writers: I have laboured to reconcile ſeveral contradictions, have left out ſome paſſages which repeated the ſame things in other words; and have neglected other particulars, that would neither have enlarged her Memoirs, nor have entertained the reador

The method I made uſe of, was this: I read over all the papers which any way related to this extraordinary woman; and when I had made myſelf perfectly *miſtreſs* of the ſubject, I digeſted the whole of her life and character into as regular and conſiſtent

conſiſtent a ſeries as I was able. Upon the whole, I may be ſaid, rather to have re-written her hiſtory, than to have tranſlated the *Petit Reſervoir*.

Now, with regard to the freedom and libertiniſm of her principles, we are not to judge too ſtrictly about the morals of a French lady, upon the point of gallantry; when it has ſo long ſince become, by the corruption of manners, a part of polite breeding among them, as the playing of cards is with us.

I do not ſuppoſe that the education of French women is formed upon this plan, with a view toward their following a licentious courſe of life; but only as men of fortune breed their ſons to the law, merely to put them on their guard againſt the chicanery of the law itſelf.

However, this knowledge ſometimes prompts women to adventure too hazardous a commerce with the other ſex; and the admiſſion of gallantry, though with the ſaving of one point, may leave perhaps, too much temptation in the way of human frailty. Add to this, that the free manners in general of the polite part of the French nation, ſerve to ſcreen a woman there from the imputation of circumſtances *leading to the very door of truth*, which the ſlighteſt indiſcretion would load the chaſteſt woman among us with.

They are therefore, leſs defended by *out-works*; and the indulgences, abſolutions, and redeemable penances of their *commode* religion too, may be here taken into conſideration and oppoſed to the ſtrict purity, and rational tenets of proteſtantiſm But, this is no place to enter into a diſquiſition of divinity.

In fine, I do not think that the polite accompliſhments and dangerous latitudes of a ſouthern education, are perfectly compatible with true

chaſtity

chaſtity or virtue. But then it may ſeem as unfair to cenſure a French lady of faſhion for her gallantry, as it would be to condem the fair Georgians for ſupplying the ſeraglio's, when each is but part of the civil commerce of their reſpective nations. (c)

The only ſecurity in ſuch deſperate caſes, ſeems to be the virtuous and happy ſtate of matrimony, contracted upon a perfect union of free choice and chaſte affection: but, alas! the early libertiniſm of men, which renders them diſſolute of manners, and inconſtant of affections, too frequently diſſolves this charming connection, and ſets them looſe again, to be hurried down the full current, and guided by the tainted gales of a corrupt and vitiated age.

I have made theſe general reflections, not in ſtrictneſs as a *juſtification*, but in ſome ſort as an *apology*, for the libertine life of our frail heroine. Perhaps, had ſhe been educated in our manners and religion, ſhe might have left a more conſiſtent character behind her; and not have been recorded both as an honour and diſgrace to our poor helpleſs ſex.

In the ſame *Pe Reſervoir*, I met alſo with a dialogue, ſuppoſec o have been held between Madame do l'Enclos and Madame Maintenon, after ſhe was in effect, and I believe in reality, Queen of France. It is written in the allowed characters of them both;—in the free philoſophic ſpirit of one,

(c) Georgia and Circaſſia are provinces of Aſia, remarkable for the beauty of their women. The eaſtern ſeraglio's are generally ſupplied from thence; and on this account, inoculation was firſt introduced there, in order to preſerve or inſure the features and complexion of the ſultana's.

one, and the repining uneaſy manner of the other. (d) And as I imagine it will entertain my Engliſh reader, I ſhall ſupply him with a tranſlation of it here. (e)

A Dialogue between Madame MAINTENON *and Madame de* L'ENCLOS.

MAINTENON.

My dear Ninon! I have invited you to pay me a viſit in private: you may perhaps imagine, that it is with a deſign of dazzling your eyes with my ſplendor. Far from it.—It is rather to receive conſolation from you.

L'ENCLOS.

Conſolation, Madam! you aſtoniſh me, I proteſt, that not having had the houour of much intercourſe with you ſince your arrival at ſuch ſupreme grandeur, I really took it for granted, that you were completely happy.

MAINTENON.

You are of the general opinion: there are a ſort of people who would reſt ſatisfied at that point. My ſoul is of a different caſt. In ſhort I have never ceaſed to regret your company, ſince we parted laſt.

L'ENCLOS

(d) See her life in *The Age of Lewis the XIV. by Voltaire.*

(e) This piece is attributed to Voltaire, by the editor of the *Reſervoir.*

L'ENCLOS.

I apprehend it. You feel, amidſt all your glory, a want of friendſhip: while I, who live only for that ſocial pleaſure, feel no paſſion of ambition. But, prithee, why have you forgot me ſo long?

MAINTENON.

Perhaps my ſituation required it. But, believe me, that among the difficulties which my elevation has ſubjected me to, I have always looked upon this misfortune, as the higheſt.

L'ENCLOS.

For my part, I have neither forgot my former pleaſures, nor my old friends. But, if you are really as unhappy as you affirm, you have cheated the whole world of their envy.

MAINTENON.

I was deceived myſelf the firſt. When we uſed formerly to ſup together, at your little houſe in Parliament-ſtreet, with De Villarceaux and Nanboûillot, when the lowneſs of my fortunes was ſubject of melancholic reflection; if any one had propheſied to me, "You ſhall one day aſcend "a throne; the greateſt monarch of the world "ſhall place his chief confidence in your counſels; all his favours ſhall paſs through your "hands; you ſhall be honoured like a queen:" if, I ſay, ſuch predictions had been made to me then,

then, I ſhould have cried aloud, *Their accompliſhments would overwhealm me with ſurprize and joy!* All this has already come to paſs.—I was ſenſible of the *ſurprize* at firſt;—but have ever ſince expected the *joy*—in vain!

L'ENCLOS.

Philoſophers, perhaps, may give you credit for all this: but the world will hardly be brought to believe that you are unhappy; or ſhould they be ever convinced of it, they would certainly lay the whole blame upon yourſelf.

MAINTENON.

Why ſhould they not be deceived, as well as I? Every one is placed as chance directs, in different degrees of life; and all the ſubordinate ones imagine the higheſt felicity to be the portion of the higheſt rank. What an error!

L'ENCLOS.

I agree with you: but this error is neceſſary to the world. Men would not be at the trouble and hazard of raiſing themſelves above the common level, if they did not moſt ſtupidly conclude, that ſuperior happineſs was the lot of ſuperior ſtations. You and I have both of us experienced pleaſures, more free from illuſion. But pray now tell me how it comes to paſs that your condition of life ſhould happen to render you ſo miſerable?

MAIN-

MAINTENON.

Ah, my dear *Ninon!* ever ſince I was obliged to drop the freedom of *that appellation*, for the formal addreſs of *Madame de l'Enclos*, I ceaſed to be happy: my ſtation required me to aſſume a reſerve; this is ſufficient: my heart became a void; my mind was under conſtraint; I *act* indeed the firſt perſonage of France, but 'tis merely a *perſonated* character. I live a borrowed life! Oh! if you knew the taſk impoſed upon a languid ſoul to ſtrive to animate another ſoul,—to amuſe a mind no longer capable of amuſement!

L'ENCLOS.

I comprehend the whole myſtery of your ſituation. I am afraid of inſulting you by this reflection, that Ninon is infinitely happier in her little houſe at Paris, with the Abbé Chateauneuf and ſome other familiar friends of no great rank in life, than you are at Verſailles, in the company of the greateſt monarch in Europe, who renders his whole court your vaſſals. I am loth to boaſt the ſuperiority of my condition: I know that one ſhould not appear too much elated before the unfortunate. Endeavour, moſt illuſtrious princeſs, to *ſupport your grandeur*, with patience and reſignation: try to forget the happy obſcurity that formerly we both rejoiced in, as well as you have been obliged to forget your former friends. All that is left for you in your preſent ſtate, is to cry out continually, "Paſt pleaſures, that muſt ne-
"ver take their turn again! Tormenting thought!
"Oh why, in loſing theſe, did I not loſe the re-
"membrance

" membrance of them alſo!" Drink of the river Lethe, Madam, and conſole yourſelf, if poſſible, by reflecting upon ſo many Queens who have ſo oft' lamented their pompous, but forlorn ſtate!

MAINTENON.

Ah, Ninon, what a wretched comfort is this! But I have a propoſal to make you: and yet, I dare not.

L'ENCLOS.

'Tis for you to be afraid. But ſpeak freely—out with it.

MAINTENON.

'Tis to barter your philoſophy for my ſtate, to raiſe you to an high rank, and keep you to live with me always at Verſailles. You will then be my friend, more than ever, by aſſiſting me to ſupport my preſent condition.

L'ENCLOS.

I always loved you, Madam, but muſt confeſs that I love myſelf ſomewhat better. There is no reaſon that I ſhould turn hypocrite, or become miſerable, merely becauſe fortune has rendered you ſo.

MAIN-

MAINTENON.

Ah, cruel Ninon! you have a heart more callous and ſelfiſh than they have even at court. You abandon me without remorſe.

L'ENCLOS.

No——my character is ſenſibility; you make me relent; and to prove that I retain my former friendſhip for you I ſhall make you a propoſal in turn. Quit Verſailles, and come live with me, in Parliament-ſtreet.

MAINTENON.

You wound me to the heart. I cannot be happy on a throne: nor can I be ſo in retiring from it. Behold the fatal effects of a court!

L'ENCLOS.

I pretend to no medicine for an incurable diſtemper. I ſhall conſult the philoſophers of my acquaintance, upon the ſtate of your caſe: but I cannot promiſe you that they will be able to work miracles in your favour.

MAINTENON.

To be placed on the very ſummit of grandeur, ——to be worſhipped, to be envied, and yet to be the ſubject of compaſſion!

L'ENCLOS.

L'ENCLOS.

Attend a little. Perhaps there may be ſomething here, not rightly underſtood. You imagine that it is your ſituation in life which renders you unhappy. May not your real misfortune proceed rather, from your not having ſuch brilliant eyes, ſo good an appetite, or ſuch lively ſenſations, as formerly? To loſe one's youth, beauty, and affections, is a truly wretched ſtate indeed! From their cauſe alone I have known a great number of women turn devotes at fifty, and relieve themſelves from one wearineſs, by flying to another.

MAINTENON.

But, you are much older than I am, and yet are neither unhappy, nor a devotee.

L'ENCLOS.

Let us diſcuſs this point a little. We cannot at our time of life expect compleat felicity. One muſt have a ſoul capable of lively impreſſions, and five ſenſes in perfection to rejoice in ſuch a triumphant ſtate as that; but, by the helps of friends, liberty, and philoſophy, one may be ſufficiently happy for our ſtage of life. The ſoul is never uneaſy, but when moved out of its proper ſphere. Take my word and experience for it, and fly to the ſhelter of my porch.

MAIN-

MAINTENON.

Behold two miniſters of ſtate, coming to interrupt us. This is a ſcene very different from philoſophy. Farewel then, my dear Ninon!

L'ENCLOS.

Adieu, moſt auguſt unfortunate!

A ſhort time after I had met with theſe anecdotes of the life and manners of the famous Ninon de l'Enclos, an extraordinary chance threw the following ſeries of letters in my way: and having thus fortuitouſly collected ſo many particulars relating to ſo extraordinary a perſon, I was tempted to amuſe the public, by giving them all together, under one view.

When I read theſe letters in the original, I confeſs I was moſt highly entertained with the eaſe of her ſtile, the ſpirit of her writing, and uncommonneſs of her ſentiments; and if the Engliſh reader finds himſelf diſappointed in any of theſe expectations, he muſt be either void of all taſte himſelf, or lay the fault upon the tranſlator.

We are to ſuppoſe that they were not deſigned for the preſs, by a letter the tranſcriber writes, when he ſends the manuſcript copy to Madame de ———, of which the following is an extract; having left out ſome particulars that I have already given in her life.

" MADAM,

" MADAM,

" I ſend you the letters of the late Madame de l'Enclos to the Marquis de Sevigné ; and though I pay an intire obeiſance to all your commands, I ſhall not deny that it is with reluctance I now venture to commit this collection into your hands.

" If you conſider, that theſe are the only remains (f) of a woman, as remarkable for the ſuperiority of her underſtanding, as for the charms of her perſon, you may well imagine how much the good fortune of being the ſole proprietor of theſe curious manuſcripts, muſt raiſe the value of them in my eſtimation. Therefore, I ſhall recl - on conſiderably on the acknowledgments that ſuch a conndence has a right to claim from you.

" I have only to add, that I hope the reading of theſe letters will not, in any ſort, leſſen the high opinion you have conceived of them, and which the Abbé Chateauneuf has raiſed in us by his Treatiſe on the Muſic of the Antients ; where he takes occaſion to draw the character of Madame de l'Enclos, under the title of *Leontium* ; (g) and among ſeveral eulogies he has given her, particularly ſpeaks of her talent for epiſtolary wri-ting.

" After having cenſured the affection of Balzac and Voiture's ſtiles, " The Epiſtles of I eontium " (ſays he) have always equally pleaſed, becauſe " they are really letters. Though the turn of " them

(f) I ſuppoſe that this letter was writ ſoon after her death, and before the works of St. Evremond had been publiſhed.

(g) See before, for this character, in her *Life*.

" them is ſingular, that they are full of reflecti-
" on, and contain a great many lively paſſages of
" wit; they have no laboured points, or con-
" ſtrained thoughts in them. As the reflections
" are always ſeaſoned with ſpirit, and the wit ne-
" ver ſhews itſelf but under the appearance of a
" free and natural imagination, they differ very
" little from private converſation; and it may ea-
" ſily be perceived, that while ſhe was writing to
" her friends, ſhe only thought ſhe was ſpeaking
" to them."

" You have now, Madam, the opportunity of judging for yourſelf, whether theſe writings have deſerved the character here given of them, or that the encomium proceeded from the partiality of a friend.

" The only injunction that I ſhall pretend to lay you under, is to remember the promiſe you have given me, not to communicate the copy that I here intruſt you with, to any perſon whatſoever: for many people who might read them, may not perhaps grant all that indulgence to the incorrectneſs of a female writer, which ſhe has a juſt claim to.

" Beſides, what kind of entertainment could this choice collection afford to ſuch an age as the preſent? There are neither ſcandal, obſcenity, nor irreligion, in any part of this work; and it is found by ſhameful experience, that none but writings of thoſe tendencies can engage the generality of readers, in theſe times.

" Madame de l Enclos writ upon the heart, on love, and women. Engaging ſubjects! and who could better acquit themſelves upon ſuch topics? With that ſenſible philoſophic turn of mind, ſhe could not be acquainted with human nature, without

out ſtudying and inveſtigating it. You know, as well as I, that none but the moſt polite perſons of the court were admitted into her ſociety; that men of the greateſt talents ſought her friendſhip and converſe; nay, were not aſhamed even to take aſſiſtance from her opinions and advice.

" In a word, all who have ſpoken of her agree, that her underſtanding comprehended as many ſolid as agreeable qualities, and that ſhe was a moſt charming philoſopher, who had cloathed the beſt maſculine ſenſe in all the graces of the moſt feminine manners.

" I have the honour to be,

" MADAM, &c."

As the following Collection of Letters are entirely upon the ſubject of gallantry, it may perhaps be expected that I ſhall continue the apology that I entered into juſt now, on my preſenting the Engliſh reader with the life and character of a fair libertine; and that before I proceed any farther, I ſhall defend myſelf for giving the public a tranſlation of her ſentiments and philoſophy upon ſo dangerous a topic. The few words, then, that I ſhall offer on this head, are to be underſtood chiefly as a juſtification for myſelf; but by no means deſigned to excuſe the libertiniſm of thoſe principles, from whence the maxims in the original writings are reduced.

It is to be obſerved here, that the buſineſs of gallantry, by the addreſs of corrupt manners, has at length become a *ſcience*, among thoſe, who by a latitude of expreſſion, as well as morals, are ſtiled the *polite* part of the world. The knowledge

of this myſtery, while it remained one among men, was capable of affording them too many dangerous advantages. The uſe of artillery, enabled thoſe nations that were firſt in poſſeſſion of it, to conquer and enſlave their inexperienced neighbours: the ſecrets of play likewiſe tempted men to be ſharpers, while ignorant and unſuſpecting perſons were cheated out of their fortunes. To make known, then, the addreſs of gallantry, like publiſhing the art of war, or revealing the chicanery of play, muſt ſerve equally for defence, as well as attack; and may aſſiſt us to encounter our enemies upon more even and reciprocal terms.

Beſides, I look upon the following ſeries of letters to be much the ſame in effect, with ſeveral moral diſcourſes that lay open the frailty of human nature, point out to us what allurements the *ſeducer* of mankind makes uſe of to betray, and what foibles are moſt likely to tempt us into the deceiving of ourſelves. And as the *knowing ourſelves*, was affirmed by an oracle to be the higheſt wiſdom, I believe that the knowledge of our weakneſs will be found to be our greateſt ſtrength. "So ſhall our ſtrength be made perfect, even in "weakneſs."

For my part, I confeſs that I have a very good opinion of gallantry; but, without affecting the prude, 'tis a very different ſort from what is deſcribed in the following letters: and I ſhall here take the liberty to offer my definition of it from my own ſentiments, and the obſervations I have had ſome opportunities of making upon the behaviour of a few perſons of gay addreſs and polite breeding.

Gallantry then, is a *liberal art*, by no means ſynonymous with intrigue: to which it has no more

more relation than muſic, dancing, or any other accompliſhment that many render perſons of different ſexes agreeable to each other. 'Tis a mutual warfare of coquetry, where each party endeavours to exert every qualification, merit, or faculty, that may be capable of winning the favourable opinion of the other, without, or good. or bad deſign; without any particular view toward matrimony or intrigue. Like the game of cheſs, which is ſo engaging, that people are fond of playing at it without a ſtake, as a pleaſing exerciſe of the mind.

"And ſtruggle for a conqueſt, not a prize."

It is certain, that a commerce of this kind, between the ſexes, ſerves to poliſh and improve them both: enlivens the ſluggiſhneſs of mortal matter; creates attention and complacency, which are the characteriſtics of good-breeding; elicits every ſpark of genius; illumines each latent talent of the mind; weeds out the natural ſelfiſhneſs of the ſoul, and innocently and agreeably occupies that hazardous interval of life, which lies between what is ſtiled our entrance into the world and our ſettling in it.

This ſpace is generally employed by men in ſports of the field, and midnight carouſals, which give a meanneſs to their ſentiment, and a rudeneſs to their manners, that are as inconſiſtent with morals as they are with politeneſs. A general commerce among women, enlivened with ſome particular attachment, has been always thought neceſſary to ſoften the uncouthneſs of man's nature. But then, an intire-good breeding and perfect purity, muſt be preſerved throughout. This ſort of gallantry

gallantry cauſes a man to exert every virtue, excellence or perfection, that either his nature or education may have given him the advantages of; and diffuſes over his whole manners, mien, and deportment, a certain polite and liberal air, that diſtinguiſhes the gentleman, from the mechanic.

Moſt part of what I have here urged, may be applied likewiſe to women; who have, beſides, this peculiar advantage from the uſe of gallantry, as I have here limitted the expreſſion, that it may ſerve to give them a management of their wit and beauty, which may help to defend them when they ſhall happen to be more ſeriouſly attacked.

The moſt innocent amuſements, from perverſion or exceſs, may terminate in vice, and gallantry may end in intrigue: but then, this event ariſes from the frailty of human nature, and might and has happened, in more frequent inſtances, where there has not been any ſuch thing as the gallantry I have been deſcribing, practiſed. The higheſt accompliſhments may ſometimes turn to our diſadvantage; but then, a polite education is no more anſwerable for this, than my ſcheme, as far as I have carried it in this definition, is for the other.

There is a certain complacency in well-bred minds which is much enlivened by a ſocial intercourſe of the ſexes; from the conſideration on one hand, of that protection and tenderneſs which women are in a ſtate to claim; and the reſpect and deference on the other hand, which are due to men. From ſuch reciprocal obligation I believe that polite men may often exert gallantry toward women, without the leaſt thought of them either as miſtreſſes or wives; and women generally receive and return ſuch addreſſes with at leaſt as innocent deſigns.

Such

Such was the gallantry between Monſieur de St. Evremond, and Madame de l'Enclos. He had never been one of her *lovers*, though always the higheſt of her *admirers:* at leaſt, the polite and fond regard they paid to each other, as may be ſeen in the preceding letters, when he was ninety and ſhe fourſcore and in different kingdoms at the ſame time, can never be attributed to an affection leſs pure than what I have been deſcribing. The charms of ſo flattering and platonic a commerce, like the beauties of ancient writings, muſt be referred intirely to *taſte*; for the pleaſures of both ariſe from certain inexpreſſible graces, which refined ſentiment or accompliſhed education only, can render us ſenſible of.

The claſſical taſte juſt now alluded to, I have taken upon truſt, from ſcholars, as I muſt confeſs myſelf to be wholly illiterate in all the dead languages. But this hint has happened luckily to occur to me in this place, as it may not improperly introduce a few words I have to ſay upon tranſlation in general, before I conclude.

I had often heard men of letters ſpeak moſt highly of the *peculiar* beauties of antient literature, preferring it beyond meaſure, to the beſt modern compoſitions. This raiſed a vaſt curioſity in me to pry into ſuch hidden treaſure; I regretted my want of opportunities toward being inſtructed in the *Belles Lettres*, and lamented my ſex more ſincerely upon this occaſion, than ever I did upon any other, in my life; for as to the reſt, I have always comforted myſelf with this happy reflection, that tho' we have leſs *liberty*, we have leſs *libertiniſm*.

I happened one evening to meet with ſome tranſlations of theſe immortal names at a friend's

houſe; I borrowed them with great earneſtneſs, and retired home with the utmoſt impatience to peruſe them. I read one, for about an hour, and grew tired; I took up a ſecond, and yawned; but upon trying the third—I fell aſleep.—I found myſelf diſappointed. I thought all the writings flat, inſipid; and on comparing them in my mind, with ſome of the ſame kinds, among our own compoſitions, I never once heſitated to decree the bays, in favour of the moderns; and fairly concluded, that all this partiality toward the antients, was in ſome, but a pedantic caprice, and in others, only an early prejudice for the ſtudies of their youth, ſtrengthened by a particular fondneſs, moſt people are affected with, toward thoſe things which have coſt them the greateſt difficulty and labour.

I continued in this error a conſiderable time, 'till I happened to become acquainted with a gentleman of taſte, letters and ſentiment, to whom I mentioned my opinion in this matter, one day that the converſation chanced to roll upon this topic. He ſmiled at my miſtake, and told me that my diſappointment muſt have been owing to the tranſlations: yet, might not be imputed ſo much to the inability of tranſlators, as to the inſufficiency of tranſlation itſelf. He then proceeded in a ſhort eſſay on the ſubject, that gave me perfect ſatisfaction on this point, and pleaſed me ſo well, that I begged he would give me the criticiſm in writing; which he did, and with which I here preſent the reader.

An ESSAY *on* CLASSIC TRANSLATION.

The reaſon why tranſlations are ſo rarely found worth reading, is, that thoſe who are capable of doing

doing juſtice to a work of this kind, would not condeſcend to ſo ſervile an office. Men of genius ſcorn to turn interpreters.

" Such is our pride, our folly, or our fate,
" That few, but thoſe who cannot write, tran-
" ſlate. (g)

The claſs of tranſlators are generally country ſchoolmaſters, who having more induſtry than genius, write more for bread than fame; and never attempt any thing farther than to preſent you with *their meaning* of the original. They give you literal wit without point, and grammatical ſenſe without ſpirit.

A tranſlation, not to fall ſhort, ſhould riſe upon the original; for wit, like meat, always requires ſome ſeaſoning upon a ſecond dreſſing. (h)

A good tranſlation is the *picture*, a bad one the corpſe of an author. The form, features and ſubſtance may remain; but the colour, warmth, and ſoftneſs are loſt.

I have ſeen this expreſſion, in many title pages, *faithfully* tranſlated from the original Greek, or Latin. Theſe are the tranſpoſers that Horace ridicules under the character of *Fidus interpres*; or literal tranſlators.

(g) Denham.

(h) Long after theſe notes were written, Butler's Remains were publiſhed; and in his chapter on tranſlators, he has hit upon the ſame alluſion. His labours " are like diſhes of meat twice dreſt, that become " inſipid, and loſe the pleaſant taſte they had at firſt." Upon reading the Remains, I have recollected many paſſages in Pope, Swift, &c. that would have been deemed plagiaries, if theſe writings had been publiſhed before theirs. This proves the homely ſaying, that *Good wits jump*.

When I first read Xenophon's Banquet in Engliſh, I imagined to myſelf that a ſelect company of antient wits had ſupped together; and that the Helot that attended during the entertainment, had taken upon him to write down the converſation when he had retired into the pantry. This image may afford one a juſt idea of moſt tranſlations I have ſeen. Dunſter's Horace, Clarke's Salluſt, Patrick's Terence, Adams's Sophocles, *any body's* Euripides; cum multis.

In truth, even the beſt tranſlations may be well compared to the wrong ſide of tapeſtry; which gives us only a rough draught of the deſign, but conceals the whole beauty of the performance.

And indeed, where the merits of a writer conſiſts, as in moſt of the claſſics they do, in richneſs of language, politeneſs of expreſſion, purity of diction, or conciſeneſs of ſentence, no tranſlation can adequately convey the beauties of the original to you.

The copiouſneſs of the dead languages often enabled the antients to expreſs a thought by a ſingle word, that the moderns are obliged to render by a ſentence We catch the original by intuition. *Vox non ex ore, ſed ex pectore emiſſa.* The tranſlation tires you with periphraſis. *Longa eſt ambages*

A true taſte for claſſic writings muſt be acquired from an immediate ſtudy of themſelves, in their original languages. Their ſpirit and flavour, like the ſweets of flowers, evaporate in chemiſtry.

So chemiſts boaſt they have a power,
From the dead aſhes of a flower,
Some faint reſemblance to produce,
But not the virtue, taſte, or juice. (a) SWIFT.

(a) See Boyle. Chap of ſtrange reports. Article 1.

This

This taſte too, muſt be early formed in our minds, before the palate has been vitiated by the poignant reliſh of modern wit. And even ſome of the *poſtantients*, ſucceeding the Auguſtan period, ſhould be carefully guarded againſt; as alſo the *faux-brilliants* of Ovid pointed out to the ſtudent.

In fine, the charms of the claſſic writings are not to be conveyed to us thro' the medium of modern erudition; but reſemble a ſixth ſenſe, which none of the other faculties can help us to the leaſt conception of.

The only way of coming any where near them muſt be by *imitation*; and yet moſt of the attempts that I have ſeen this way, appear to me but *mimickry*."

What this Gentleman has ſaid above, with regard to the difficulty of doing juſtice to the inimitable beauties of the claſſics, may be ſome ſort of apology for the many wretched tranſlations that have been made of them; but this can be no manner of excuſe for the miſerable ones there are ſuch plenty of, from one modern language into another. Thoſe that I could tolerably judge of, were from French into Engliſh; and I do declare that it is a perfect affront on the public, to have ſuch men and ignorant performances impoſed upon it by the inſolence of editors.

As my friend above ſays, that the claſſic tranſlations are generally done by country ſchool-maſters, I am apt to believe that all theſe have been made by *uſhers* of boarding-ſchools; by the ſole helps of grammar and dictionary, without the leaſt acquaintance with the idiom of the language, or any manner of capacity for the ſpirit of the writer.

After I had proceeded about half way through the following letters, I was preſented with a tranſlation of them, which before I had read it, gave me a good deal of mortification, to imagine that I had thrown away ſo much needleſs trouble about them. But the peruſal ſoon quickened my ſpirit for finiſhing the remainder. I ſhall here preſent you with ſome ſpecimens of this curious piece, in order to give you a true notion of moſt modern verſions.

In the firſt letter of the original, and ſecond paragraph, after ſaying how capricious a thing the heart is, Ninon adds, On croit le ſaiſir, & l'on embraſſe qu'une *ombre*. Here the *uſher* takes his dictionary, and finding *ombre* to give *ſhadow*, in Engliſh, writes it down literally ſo. "You think "you ſeize the *object*, but embrace only a *ſha-* "*dow*."——How tediouſly, how flatly expreſſed! When I came to this paſſage, I was ſtruck with an image, and not being *dictionary-bound*, I rendered *ombre* a *cloud*. "We think to graſp it, "but embrace a *cloud*;" alluding to the fable of Juno and Ixion. This alluſion enlivens the paſſage, and adds a ſpirit to the expreſſion. But perhaps the *uſher* might have been ſtruck with an imagery himſelf, at the paragraph; as the dog and bone of Æſop; which however, would have been a very mean one here: yet even ſo, he ſhould have written *ſubſtance* inſtead of *object*; for otherwiſe, the contraſt is not ſufficiently marked—— as *ſhadow* is itſelf an *object*, though not a *ſubſtance*.

In the third paragraph of the ſame letter, l'Enclos ſpeaking of the danger of even a friendly intimacy between the ſexes, adds L'amour eſt ſi *malin!* Now for *malin*. My *uſher* ſticks the pen behind

behind his ear, ſpits on his thumb, and ruſtles through the leaves, in queſt of *malin*. Well, what ſays old Boyer upon the article *malin*? "Why he renders it *malignant*. But is too near "the French, and might look too much like a "learner's taſk.——*Spiteful* is the ſame ſenſe, "Pen me down *ſpiteful*."——*Write me down an aſs*. (b) L'amour eſt ſi malin! Love is ſo ſpiteful ——Was ever ſuch ſtuff as this! Love is neither *ſpiteful* nor *malignant*, let Boyer ſay what he will.——But Cupid is a ſly archer, who frequently lies on the lurch, and lets fly at us often, when we imagine ourſelves quite out of his reach. This was the idea that occurred to me, upon meeting *malin* joined with *l'amour*; and this muſt have been the meaning of the writer. I have accordingly, given this turn, and as before, added likewiſe, an image to the paſſage. L'amour, eſt ſi malin! Cupid is ſo ſly an urchin!

Again, in the laſt line of letter IV. Ninon adviſes the Marquis while merely in purſuit of pleaſure, never to engage in an amour of a woman of ſenſe and merit, for that ſuch an affair would not long continue a frolic of gallantry, and concludes, Vous ſeres a votre *menage*; which my *uſher* has rendered, "This would be a marriage," and literally ſpeaking, it is ſo; but as *menage* is a comprehenſive term, and takes in the whole of domeſtic œconomy, I have uſed the liberty of expreſſing the paſſage thus: "You may as well be "married and ſettled in the country."

In ſhort, I have tranſlated Ninon by Ninon; by the ſpirit of her own writings; with the contexts of her life and character; leaving the pedantry of Boyer, to *Meſ-Demoiſelles* and their *uſhers*.

I ſhall

(b) Shakeſpear's *Much Ado about Nothing*.

I ſhall not trouble you with any more ſpecimens of this poor *ſchool-boy's exerciſe*; for I believe you have already ſeen enough to agree with me, that this is rather to *traduce*, than to *tranſlate* an author. So I ſhall here take my leave of the *courteous reader*, but muſt firſt intreat the favour of his *courteſy*, to believe that the publication was owing intirely to the *importunities of friends*—*imperfect copies having ſtolen abroad*, and ſuch other *quarter-begging* apologies as are pleaded in moſt of the modern prefaces.

Adieu.

N. B. It may be obſerved throughout this work, that I have choſen to ſpell the word *galantry*, with a ſingle *l*, but I have done ſo to diſtinguiſh the character of a lover from that of a ſoldier——*galantry* in love, from *gallantry* in war. I confeſs that I am not ſupported in this criticiſm, from either of the languages; for in Engliſh, the word in either ſenſe is ſpelled with two *l's*; and in French it has but one. But, I thought this orthography neceſſary to take away the equivocation, and to give the word a preciſion, which it needed before.

As the following ſeries of letters is, if I may uſe ſuch an expreſſion, a *ſingle handed* correſpondence from *Madame de l'Enclos* to the *Marquis de Sevigne*; his letters being only implied, or alluded to in her anſwers; it may afford ſome aſſiſtance to the reader, toward a quicker conception of the ſcope, ſpirit, and deſign of theſe writings, to frame a ſort of *Novel* by way of *Argument*, from the whole; referring the ſeveral parts of it, to the ſeveral letters, from whence they are deduced. This I ſhall attempt

attempt to do in the following pages, which may ſerve alſo for the amuſement, as well as the information of my readers.

The *Marquis de Sevigne*, a young man of family and fortune, having finiſhed his ſtudies and exerciſes, being nominated to a poſt in the army, and juſt entering, as the phraiſe is, *into life*; complained one day, to *Madame de l'Enclos*, who was one of his friends, that he had found himſelf diſappointed on his firſt ſetting out, with ſanguine hopes and pallid fruitions; that dreſs, equipage, ſports, camps, courts, &c. had failed his expectations, and afforded him but ſlight and tranſient pleaſures. Eager in purſuit, and lukewarm in poſſeſſion, he expreſſed ſome apprehenſions, that his mind might not be in a ſound and natural ſtate; for that his affections and deſires were but a ſort of *ſickly appetites* made up of *cravings and diſguſts*. He made her ſome compliment upon her ſenſe, knowledge and philoſophy, deſired her opinion upon his ſituation, and intreats her friendly counſels, to inſtruct him what ſcheme of life he ſhould engage in, in order to obtain a more lively reliſh for pleaſure.

Madame de l'Enclos told him, that the diſſatisfaction of his mind, was owing to his heart having never yet experienced the ſolicitudes of love: that without ſome particular attachment, ſome principal object, to which our thoughts, words, and actions, are ultimately to be referred, our lives would paſs like dreams away in vain purſuits, and illuſive graſps.

The Marquis, ſtruck with the ſubject, and charmed with the ſpirit of Ninon's reflections, begged ſhe would ſuffer him to enter into a correſpondence

pondence with her upon this topic; which ſhe permitted; and accordingly, the next day, he wrote her a letter, wherein he places himſelf under her tutelage, praying her to ſupply him with a *chart* of life, to ſteer his future courſe by.

Her firſt letter is an anſwer to this: in which ſhe declines the guardianſhip he tenders her, but offers to become his confident, to receive advices, from time to time, of the ſituation of his mind and affections, and to lend him the clue of her experience and counſels, to conduct him through the labyrinth of the human heart, both male and female.

In anſwer to this, the Marquis repeats what he had before mentioned to her, with regard to the diſappointment of his *hopes*, even in the fruition of his *wiſhes*; and her ſecond letter gives him the philoſophy of this matter; as before hinted in their converſation upon this ſubject: the reſt of her letters, and ſo on the ſeventh, incluſive, ſufficiently explain themſelves; nor is there any extract from them neceſſary to frame our novel.

The Marquis, in purſuit of a proper object to fix his affections upon, falls in love with the Counteſs de * * * *, an agreeable young widow The progreſs and conduct of which paſſion, are the ſtated ſubjects from the eighth, to the thirtieth letter, incluſive, interſperſed with variety of epiſodes, and philoſophic ſentiments; about which time, *Madame de l'Enclos* becomes acquainted accidentally with the Counteſs; conceives an high opinion and eſteem for her ſenſe and merits, and engages in a cloſe connection of friendſhip with her.

In the thirty-firſt letter, the Counteſs gives a very

very lively deſcription of the method in which ſhe had, for ſome time, conducted herſelf, in order to defend her heart from love; but confeſſes at length that the merits and addreſſes of the Marquis, had won her affections.

Madame de l'Enclos, apprehending ſome danger for her new ally, from her avowed paſſion, and the aſſiduities of the Marquis; leſt ſhe might be won upon *unequal terms*, ſupports her virtue by her counſels, and baffles all the arts of her lovers; hinting at the ſame time, that more honourable conditions would be willingly accepted of. Theſe particulars form the ſubject of the thirty-ſecond, to the forty-eighth letter, incluſive.

The Marquis, in deſpair of winning the Counteſs, upon his own terms, quits the purſuit, and engages in a libertine courſe of life. *Madame de l'Enclos*, finding it impoſſible to withhold him, for the preſent, ſeems to enter into ſchemes of pleaſures, with the deſign of preſerving her ſway over him, in hope of reclaiming him again, in favour of her fair friend. In order to which, ſhe endeavours to give him an unfavourable impreſſion of the *Financiere*, his firſt amour, and recommends inconſtancy in his galantries, by way of preventing any particular attachment to detain him too long from the chaſte and rational ſcheme of happineſs ſhe had in view for him. This is the ſcope of letter forty-nine, and ſo *en ſuite*, to the fifty-third, incluſive.

At length, ſhe communicates to him a letter ſhe had received from the Counteſs, where ſhe declares, in diſguſt at his behaviour, her reſolution of quitting the world, and retiring to paſs the remainder of her life at her own eſtate, in

the

the country. This revived his former paſſion, and awakened ſentiment; he had become tired and aſhamed of the profligate diſſipation in which he had lately ſquandered away his time, and character; throws himſelf at her feet, ſhe relents, they are happy; and ſo conclude the ſeries, and the novel.

THE

THE LETTERS OF Mademoiſelle Ninon de l'Enclos TO THE Marquis de Sevigné

LETTER I.

HOW Marquis! Charge me with the care of your education! to guide you in the courſe you are now to ſteer! This is really, expecting too much from my friendſhip for you You know that when a woman who has paſſed her prime, is obſerved to pay any particular attention toward a young man, they immediately cry, *She means to enter him into life*; and you are not ignorant of the malicious intimation with which they throw out ſuch kind of expreſſions.

I will

I will not therefore, expoſe myſelf to the hazard of ſuch ridicule. All that I can do for your ſervice is to become your confident: you ſhall communicate to me every ſituation of your mind; on each occaſion I will freely give you my ſentiments, and ſhall endeavour to aſſiſt you in becoming acquainted with your own heart, as well as that of woman.

Notwithſtanding the amuſement which I promiſed myſelf in this correſpondence, I ſhall not diſſemble the difficulties I apprehend in my enterprize. This ſame heart, which is to be the ſubject of my lectures, is ſuch a compoſition of contraſt, that whoever attempts to treat of it muſt unavoidably appear to fall into contradictions. We think to graſp it, but *embrace a cloud*. A very Camelion! viewed in different lights, it exhibits oppoſite colours; which nevertheleſs, exiſt together in the ſame ſubject.

You muſt then, prepare yourſelf to hear many ſingularities, upon which I ſhall offer you my own concluſions; and if they ſhould happen to appear to you rather new than juſt, you are at liberty to rate them accordingly.

I have beſides, a delicate ſcruple about this undertaking; for I foreſee that I can hardly be ſincere, without detracting a little from the *romance* of my ſex. But, you would know what are my opinions about love, and all that relates to it; and I ſhall muſter up reſolution enough to deliver you my thoughts ingenuouſly, upon this ſubject.

I am to ſpend this evening at Monſieur de la Rouchefaucault's, with La Fontaine and Made la Sabliere. If you will be of our party, Fontaine ſhall entertain you with two new fables,

which they ſay do by no means fall off from the ſpirit of his former compoſitions in that way. Prithee meet us Marquis. But hold—Have I nothing to apprehend from the commerce we are entering into? Cupid is ſo ſly an urchin! Let me examine my heart—All ſafe—'Tis otherwiſe engaged; and the ſentiments it is affected with towards you, are more a kin to friendſhip, than to love. But at the worſt, if any ſuch caprice ſhould hereafter happen to ſeize me, we muſt endeavour to retrieve ourſelves from ſo unlucky an adventure, with the beſt addreſs we can.

We are going then to enter into a courſe of morality. Yes Marquis of morality. But that this expreſſion may not too much alarm you, we ſhall engage in no other branch of it but love alone; and this is known to have too great an influence on the manners of mankind, not to deſerve a particular ſtudy.

This ſcheme of ours diverts me vaſtly. But ſhall I not mortify you ſometimes? This is another of my fears: for you know that I am an unmerciful reaſoner when I ſet about it. With any other kind of heart than my own, I ſhould have made the moſt rigid philoſopher that ever was recorded. Adieu Let us begin whenever you pleaſe.

LET-

LETTER II.

YES, Marquis, I will keep my word with you; and upon all occaſions ſhall ſpeak the truth, though I muſt ſometimes tell it at my own expence. I have more firmneſs of mind than perhaps you may imagine; and 'tis very probable, that in the courſe of this correſpondence, you will think I puſh this quality too far, even to ſeverity. But then pleaſe to remember that I have only the outſide of a woman, and that my heart and mind are wholly maſculine.

Obſerve the method I deſign to make uſe of in this commerce between us. As I deſire nothing more than to be rightly underſtood, before I communicate my opinions, I ſhall propoſe them to that excellent perſon with whom we ſupped laſt night. 'Tis true, indeed, that he has not much prejudice in favour of poor human nature, and has as little faith in virtue, as in ſprites; but then his ſeverity mitigated by my indulgence for human frailty, will give you, I believe both the kind and portion of philoſopy that may be neceſſary in a commerce with women.

Let us proceed now, to the remainder of your letter. You ſay that ſince you have entered into life, you have been diſappointed; your enjoyments fall ſhort of expectations; diſguſt and wearineſs purſue you every where. You fly to ſolitude, but grow tired when you arrive at it: you know not, in ſhort, to what can be attributed the reſtleſſneſs that afflicts you.

I am going then, to put you out of pain about that point; for I have taken upon me to give

you

you my thoughts with regard to every affection of your mind; though perhaps, you may often ſtart queſtions which may embarraſs me as much as they do yon.

That inquietude that impatience, you complain of in yourſelf, proceeds entirely from the vacancy in your heart: It is void of love, and it was formed to receive it. You are abſolutely as one may ſay, under a neceſſity of loving. Yes, Marquis, nature has given us all a certain *quota* of affection, which we muſt exerciſe upon ſome particular object. Your time of life is adapted to the emotions of love; and 'till your heart has experienced theſe fond ſenſations, you will ever feel there, a painful vacuity: there will be no end to that laſſitude you complain of. In a word love is the aliment of the heart, as food is of the body. To love is to fulfill the ſcope of nature. 'Tis the ſubmiting to a fate.

But if poſſible, endeavour to avoid that kind of love which riſes to a paſſion: to prevent this *misfortune* I am almoſt tempted to ſecond the advice that has been already given you to prefer the company of thoſe women who ſet up for nothing more than being entertaining triflers, before thoſe dangerous charmers who are capable of inſpiring as much eſteem as love. At your age of life one need not think of entering into a ſerious engagement: you have no occaſion then, to ſeek for friendſhip in a woman; you have nothing to look for but an agreeable miſtreſs.

The ſociety of ladies of refined ſentiment, or thoſe whom the ravages of time have deprived of every thing they could value themſelves upon, except their intellectual qualities, does well enough for men, who like them are upon the declline.

But

But for you, ſuch women would be really *too good company*, if I may expreſs myſelf thus. We have no occaſion for riches, but in proportion to our wants. All you have to do at preſent, is to attach yourſelf to one, who joined to an amiable perſon, has a politeneſs in her manners a lively diſpoſition, a taſte for ſocial pleaſures, and whom a little ſympathy of affections would not much alarm.

You may urge perhaps, that in the opinion of a rational man, ſuch women muſt appear to trifling: but do you think they are to be judged of with ſuch ſeverity? Be aſſured Marquis, that if unfortunately they ſhould happen to acquire a more ſolid character, both they and you would be conſiderable looſers by the bargain.

You require eſtimable qualities in women! Prithee, can't you find them in a friend? Shall I ſpeak plainly to you? 'Tis not our ſenſe or virtues, but our gaiety and foibles that you have occaſion for. The paſſion you might conceive for a woman of true merit, would be dangerous to you. 'Till you have entered into the *ſober* ſcheme of matrimony, you ſhould ſeek for amuſement merely, among women: a light affection only ſhould engage you. Beware of a ſerious attachment, for I propheſy that you will make but a bad end of it.

If you did not think in a much graver way, than the generality of young men, I ſhould perhaps ſpeak to you in a different manner. But I perceive that yon are ready to fall into the contrary extreme from their inconſideratcneſs. You ſhould then only attach yourſelf to a woman, who like an amiable child, can amuſe you by entertaining follies, ſlight caprices, and all the pretty fail-

failings that make the pleaſures of an air of galantry.

Shall I tell you what makes love ſo dangerous? 'Tis the too high idea we are apt to frame of it. But, to ſpeak the truth, love, conſidered as a paſſion is merely a blind inſtinct, that we ſhould rate accordingly: 'Tis an appetite which inclines us to one object rather than another, without our being able to account for our taſte. Conſidered as the bond of friendſhip, where reaſon preſides, it is no longer a paſſion, and loſes the very name of love. It becomes eſteem: which is indeed a very pleaſing affection, but too tranquil; and therefore, incapable of rouſing you from your preſent ſupineneſs.

If you madly trace the footſteps of our antient heroes in romance, adopting their extravagant ſentiments; you will ſoon experience that ſuch falſe chivalry, metamorphoſes this charming paſſion into a melancholly folly nay often a tragical one: a perfect phrenzy! but diveſt it of all the borrowed pomp of opinion, and you will then perceive how much it will contribute both to your happineſs and pleaſure. Be aſſured, that if either reaſon or *knight errantry* ſhould be permitted to form the union of our hearts, love would become a ſtate of apathy and madneſs.

The only way to avoid theſe extremes, is to purſue the courſe I have pointed out to you. At preſent you have no ſort of occaſion for any thing more than mere amuſement; and believe you will not meet it, except among women of the character I ſpeak of. Your heart wa.. occupation; and they are framed to ſupply the void. At leaſt, give my preſcription a fair trial, and I will be anſwerable for the ſucceſs.

I pro-

I promiſed to reaſon with you, and I think I have kept my word. Farewell. I have juſt received an agreeable letter from Monſieur de St. Evremond, that I muſt anſwer immediately. I ſhall write him the ſentiments I have mentioned to you, on this ſubject, and I am much deceived if he does not agree with my opinion.

To-morrow the Abbe Chateauneuf, and perhaps Moliere, are to be with me. We are to read over the Tartuffe * together in order to make ſome neceſſary alterations. Depend upon it, Marquis, that whoever denies the maxims I have here laid down to you, partakes a little of that character in his play.

(c) The Hypocrite.

LETTER

LETTER III.

NOtwithſtanding all I have ſaid, you ſeem to adhere to your firſt prejudices. You would have a miſtreſs that you could reſpect and eſteem, and who might at the ſame time become your friend. Such ſentiments are certainly very commendable, if upon trial they could produce that happineſs which one might reaſonably expect from them. But experience will ſoon convince you that theſe fine expreſſions are but empty ſounds.

For merely an amuſement of the mind, muſt it be neceſſary to hunt after important qualities? The reading of romances has almoſt impaired your underſtanding! The poor Marquis! he has ſuffered himſelf to be dazzled with the ſublime *theorems* which are often the ſubjects of converſation. But my dear friend, to what account will all theſe *rational chimeras* turn? I ſhall freely give you my opinion of them. They are really moſt beautiful *counters*; and oh the pity that they are not current!

When you deſign to enter upon a ſettled plan of life, look out for a woman of good ſenſe, true virtue, and high principles: all theſe are perfectly conſiſtent with the dignity—I had almoſt ſaid the *gravity*—of a married ſtate. But while galantry is your ſcheme, beware of growing ſerious, and give credit to what I tell you, I know what will agree with you better than you do yourſelf.

In general men pretend that they covet eſſential qualities in love. Ignorant as they are, how much diſappointed would they be if they ſhould meet with them! what would they gain by being

edified, when it was amuſement only they had occaſion for? Such a rational miſtreſs as you contend for, would be—a wife—for whom I acknowledge you might conceive an infinite deal of *reſpect*. But prithee, what's become of the fondneſs? Gone! A woman eſtimable in all particulars, would ſubject, would humble you too much, to ſuffer you to love her long. Compelled to eſteem, even to admire her ſometimes, you could not avoid ceaſing to love her ſoon. So much excellence would be a reproach direct, a critic too ſevere upon your own failings, not to make your pride revolt in time: and when once that is mortified, farewel love:

Analize your ſentiments ſtrictly, examine cloſely into your own heart, and you will find this maxim true. I have but a moment to bid you adieu.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

UPON my word, Marquis, you will at laſt put me paſt my patience. Lord, how ſtupid you are ſometimes! I have your letter before me. You do not apprehend me. Attend a little better to what I ſay. I did not tell you that you ſhould chuſe a fool for your miſtreſs: nothing could be farther from my ſentiments. But I ſaid, that in reality you had no manner of occaſion for any thing more at preſent, than an amuſing occupation of heart and mind; and that to render ſuch an engagement agreeable, one need not inſiſt upon very extraordinary qualities.

I repeat it again—In love, men ſhould look for nothing farther than amuſement ſolely; and I believe, upon ſuch a ſubject as this, that my opinion may obtain ſome credit. A little peculiarity of temper, a ſlight caprice, or a childiſh quarrel, have frequently greater effect on men, and attach them more ſtrongly than the moſt rational or ſolid characters.

A perſon, whom you highly eſteem for the ſtrength and juſtneſs of his ſentiments, (d) ſaid once before me, that "caprice was annexed to "beauty, to be its counterpoiſon." (e) I fought him out upon his maxim, as I am fully of opinion, that *caprice was joined to beauty, to cnimate its*

 charms

(d) La Bruyere.

(e) Doctor Young, in one of his ſatires upon women, has framed a diſtich upon this thought.

"An antidote in female caprice lies,
"Kind Heaven! againſt the poiſon of their eyes."

Univ. Paſ.

charms, and to inhance their value by adding ſpirit and poignancy. (f)

There is no ſentiment more cold, or of ſhorter continuance, than admiration. We grow inſenſibly indifferent to the ſame *ſet* of features, tho' ever ſo beautiful; and if there be not a little quickening ſpirit, to give them life and action, their very uniformity will ſoon deſtroy the ſentiments they at firſt excited. A little change of temper is abſolutely neceſſary, to give to a fine woman that happy variety which prevents our growing weary of finding her always the ſame. In truth, 'tis unlucky enough for a woman to have too even a diſpoſition; the equality of her temper permits indifference to ariſe——perhaps diſguſt. 'Tis always the ſame ſtatue; and a man continues his own maſter—perfectly at eaſe before her. She is ſo reaſonable, ſo gentle, that ſhe deprives one even of the liberty of ſquabbling with her; and that liberty is ſometimes ſo great a pleaſure!

Place in her ſtead, a woman, lively, uncertain, froward—but theſe only to a certain degree.——

The

(f) I have meet with a pretty alluſion upon this ſubject. "The caprices of beauty may be compared "to ſhrubs that ſometimes occur in laying out an "improvement; which though out of rule to plant "there, would be want of taſte to root out." *Series of letters between Henry and Frances*

I like this ſentiment better than either of the others. The firſt ſays that caprice deſtroys love—the ſecond, that it cheriſhes it. But the latter, that it is neither to be wiſhed in or out of a pretty woman's compoſition. And in truth, it helps to form that kind of character, which made the poet cry out,

"There is no living with thee—or without thee!"

The ſcene is ſhifted: the lover meets in the ſame perſon with all the charms of variety. Caprice is the ſalt of galantry, that preſerves it from corrupting. Inquietudes, jealouſies, quarrels, piques, and reconciliations, are, if not the *diet*, at leaſt the *exerciſe* of love. Inchanting variety! that fills and occupies the ſenſible heart more charmingly, than all the regularity of deportment, and tedious ſameneſs of what are deemed the *better characters*.

I know how to deal with you men. A little change of temper throws you into uncertainty, and gives you as much difficulty and uneaſineſs to diſſipate, as if it were a victory to be gained over new miſtreſs. A little hurry now and then, keeps you in wind: you will ſtruggle, and alſo conquer, and be overcome, by turns. In vain poor reaſon ſighs! you cannot conceive how ſuch a *meteor* ſhould lead you ſo implicitly about: every one tells you that the idol of your affections is a compound of vanity and caprice.—But, 'tis a ſpoiled child, and you cannot rid yourſelf of a childiſh fondneſs for it! Even thoſe efforts that reflection may force you to make in order to ſet you free, will often ſerve but to bind your chain the faſter. For love is never ſo ſtrong, as when we imagine it ready to break from the reſentment of a quarrel. Its throne is tempeſt——and its ſtate convulſion! Reduce it to the government of reaſon——it languiſhes! it expires!

Upon the whole, I would not adviſe you to chuſe a miſtreſs, whoſe ſenſe and merit are predominant, but one whoſe humour ſometimes bears ſway, and ſilences proud reaſon. Otherwiſe, be aſſured that it will not long continue a frolic of galantry; and you may as well be *married, and ſettled in the country*.

Theſe are my laſt words. Adieu.

LETTER V.

YES. I agree with you Marquis, that a woman who is only a compoſition of whim and caprice, would make but a diſagreeable companion, and muſt diſguſt in the end. I acknowledge alſo that a conſtant irregularity of temper would turn your amour, your methaphorical warfare into a literal one. But then indeed, it was not to a perſon of ſuch characters that I adviſed you to attach yourſelf. You always overſhoot the mark.

In my laſt letter, I deſcribed an agreeable woman, who might be rendered ſtill more engaging, by a little inequality of temper, with a tincture of coquetry, &c. And you ſeem to ſpeak to me of an arrant ſhrew, that is continually untoward and perverſe. What different characters are here! When I mention *humour*, I meant only that kind which ariſes from an earneſtneſs of ſpirit, a certain impatience of manner, with perhaps, a little diſpoſition to jealouſy. In a word ſuch a one as is born of love itſelf, and not the offspring of a natural perverſeneſs, that is frequently ſtiled *humour*. (g)

When 'tis love that renders a woman unreaſonable; when 'tis that alone which urges her impatience, what man can be ſo void of delicacy or ſentiment, to complain? Do ſuch extravagancies not prove the violence of the paſſion? For my part, I ſhall never be perſuaded that whoever can contain themſelves within very reaſonable

(g) In Engliſh, this point is very well diſtinguiſhd, by ſtiling this latter character *humourſome*.

ble bounds, were ever much in love. Can we be really ſo without ſuffering ourſelves to be hurried away by the tranſports of an heart-felt affection? without being ſenſible of all thoſe agitations which it neceſſarily creates. No ſurely —— And who can perceive all theſe emotions in the beloved object, without a flattering pleaſure? While they are rendered uneaſy by her ſuſpicions and reſentments, they feel with a ſecret delight, that they are beloved—that they are loved with paſſion. And ſuch capricious behaviour is ſo much further a convincing proof, as it is involuntary.

This, my dear Marquis, is the ſecret charr that pays the lover's pains, and dries his tears. But, if you could imagine I ſhould tell you that an ill tempered, abſurd virago, could ſupply the pleaſures of love, I beg you would undeceive yourſelf forthwith.

I ſaid indeed, and ſhall ever perſiſt in my opinion, that there muſt be a little peculiarity of temper, ſome caprice, and a ſenſible emotion in a commerce of galantry, to prevent it from growing languid, and to make it laſt. But it is very certain, that theſe ſeaſonings, will not naturally anſwer the end, except where they proceed from love alone.

If a particularity of *humour* ariſes ſolely from untoward nature, from a difficult, uneaſy or froward diſpoſition, I ſhould be in haſte to pronounce it, that ſuch a perverſe temper muſt ſoon render a woman hateful, and occaſion the moſt diſguſting quarrels. Such an union muſt become a real chain, from which one ſhould endeavour to extricate themſelves as quick as poſſible.

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

YOU think then, Sir, that you have urged one invincible argument against me, by saying that it is not in our power to beſtow our affections where we pleaſe; and that conſequently, you are not at liberty to choſe the object of your attachment. What a ſtrange moral is here! Prithee leave this common place maxim to thoſe women who are reduced to plead it as an apology for their own weakneſs. They muſt have ſomething foreign to lay the blame upon, in order to eſcape the cenſure themſelves. Somewhat like the voluptuary that Montaigne mentions, who when pinched by the gout, uſed to cry out *that curſed ham!* It was a ſtroke of ſympathy, ſay they, too powerful to reſiſt—Can we over-rule the impulſes of our heart? There is a deſtiny! &c.

All objections, to be ſure, muſt be ſilenced, when ſuch very notable arguments as they have been offered; and theſe opinions have actually gained ſo much credit in the world, that one muſt enter the liſts againſt a multitude, who would attempt to refute them. But ſuch maxims are ſo generally received, only becauſe it is the intereſt of many to have them univerſally believed.

People are not aware, that ſuch excuſes, inſtead of juſtifying their weakneſs, are a profeſſed acknowledgment that they were rather inclined to indulge themſelves in it. For my part, I take the liberty of diſſenting from the common opinion in this particular. It is ſufficient to affirm that it is not impoſſible, at leaſt, to conquer our incli-

inclinations in order to condemn thoſe which are diſhonourable or abſurd.

Pray have we not known many women *overrule the impulſe of their hearts*; after they have diſcovered that the object of their regards has been deemed unworthy of them? How many others have ſtifled the moſt tender paſſion, and ſacrificed it to the conveniencies of a ſettlement? Flight, time and abſence, are remedies to which the ſtrongeſt *impulſes* muſt, at length ſubmit. They grow weaker by degrees, till at laſt the fond impreſſion wears inſenſibly away.

I acknowledge, that to acquit one's ſelf w n ſucceſs in ſuch a difficulty, requires the full exertion of our prudence and philoſophy. I imagine however, that the improbability we are too apt to apprehend in ſuch a conflict, may often deprive us even of the courage to attempt it: ſo that though I affirm there is no inclination unſurmountable in ſpeculation, I muſt admit there are few that are really conquered in practice. But then, this is owing intirely, to our not adventuring to enter the liſts with our paſſions and foibles. (h)

However, to wave any further diſpute upon this ſubject, and as our argument at preſent, is merely on the topic of galantry, it would be impertinent to put you upon the ſtruggle with any particular inclination you may conceive for a wo-

(h) Here is an admirable lecture againſt the *pleaded* frailty of our natures; which proceeding from the mouth of a libertine, may probably have better effect than the ſtrongeſt writings of more ſevere moraliſts. There are, interſperſed through theſe letters, ſeveral reflections of the ſame kind, which may ſerve to ſtrengthen the apology I have before made, for offering a tranſlation of this work to the public

man more or leſs amiable: but then, as you have not yet entered into any engagement, I only mean to point out to you the character that is moſt likely to anſwer the purpoſe of ſuch an adventure.

It were *moſt devoutly to be wiſhed*, that ſome juſter ſentiments, or more real merit, had a greater ſway over your hearts and minds: that they were capable of filling up the *void* for the preſent, and alſo of fixing your conſtancy for life. But, experience has evinced that ſuch a hope is vain. I do not reaſon then, upon what ye ought to be, but what in ſad truth, ye are. My deſign is only t ive ye the knowledge of your hearts, as they are in reality, conſtituted; not ſuch as I could wiſh indeed, they were.

I am myſelf, the firſt to lament the depravity of your taſtes however indulgent I may be to the irregularity of your appetites: but not being able to reform the follies of your hearts, I would inſtruct you to make the beſt of their weakneſſes. Finding it impoſſible to make you wiſe, I can only attempt to render you happy.

It is an old ſaying, that *to deſtroy the paſſions, would be to annihilate us*, all we can do is to regulate them. They are in our hands, what poiſons are in pharmacy; which under the management of a ſkilful chymiſt, may be wrought up into ſalutary medicines.

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

AND who doubts, Marquis, but it is real merit that renders ye agreeable to women? All I doſire to know is, what idea you have affixed to that expreſſion? Do you, by *real merit*, intend a ſolid underſtanding, nice diſcernment, great erudition, prudence, diſcretion—in ſhort, an *heap* of extraordinary qualities that more frequently *incumber*, than render ye happy or ſucceſful? If theſe be your ſentiments about *merit*, we certainly can never underſtand each other.

Reſerve ſuch cardinal virtues for your commerce among men. They have agreed upon the barter of ſuch commodities. But, in galantry, exchange theſe rare and ſuperior excellencies for more common and familiar qualifications. Theſe are the only *ſpecie*, that have credit in ſuch a traffic. And be their intrinſic value never ſo low, they ceaſe to be *counters*, when they have obtained a *currency*: for true merit conſiſts leſs, perhaps, in real perfection, than in what the world have agreed to receive as ſuch.

It is much more convenient to be maſter of qualities agreeable to thoſe we wiſh to pleaſe, than to poſſeſs others that even thoſe very perſons themſelves, may acknowledge more eſtimable. In a word, we muſt copy the manners, and imitets the foibles of thoſe we aſſociate with if we would live with eaſe or ſatisfaction among them.

What is the proper deſtination of women? what is the *role* you allow them in your drama? is it not to ſooth, to pleaſe, to charm? The advantages of perſon, the graces of mien, a livelineſs in converſation, with a politeneſs of manners,

are the ſureſt qua ifications for compaſſing theſe ends: women poſſeſs theſe accompliſhments in the ſupreme degree; and 'tis in theſe they would have you likewiſe to excel. Call them triflers, if ye dare.—They perform the higheſt part who are formed and deſtinied to render ye happy.

Is it not truly, to the charms of our converſe, and ccmplacency of our manners, that you are indebted for your ſincereſt pleaſures, for all the ſocial virtues; in a word, your entire well being? Anſwer me ingenuouſly; learning, ambition, riches, valour, even friendſhip itſelf, of which, nd with reaſon, you ſo much boaſt; are any or of theſe together, capable of rendering you perfectly happy? Or at leaſt, the pleaſures you receive from them, are they lively enough even to make you tolerably ſo? Doubtleſs no. All theſe together joined, would not be able to rid you of that ſtupid ſameneſs of life which is ſo apt to oppreſs you; and ye muſt have in truth, remained the moſt pitiable creatures alive!

But 'tis the peculiar province of women to diſſipate this mortal languor by the lively ſeaſonings of their converſe, and the charms they are capable of diffuſing o'er galantry. A fond folly, a flattering hope, or an ardent wiſh, are the only things that can awaken your attention, and give you a true ſenſe of happineſs. For ſurely, Marquis, there is a vaſt difference between merely *poſſeſſing* our good fortune, and *reliſhing* the pleaſures of that enjoyment.

The bare neceſſaries of life can only make a man *eaſy*; 'tis ſuperfluity that renders him *rich*; or makes him ſenſible he is ſo 'Tis not ſuperior qualities alone that makes us amiable: 'tis perhaps a fault to be maſter of none but what are of real

real value. To be well received in the world, one muſt be agreeable, entertaining, ſerviceable to the pleaſures of others. I promiſe you that there is no ſucceeding in general, but particularly with women, except by theſe means.

Pray tell me, what buſineſs have we with your over-grown knowledge, the depth of your judgment, or the extent of your learning? If you poſſeſs only ſuch advantages, if ſome ſlighter and more familiar talents do not ſoften and poliſh their uncouthneſs—I have ta'en the poll—So far from pleaſing, you will appear a moſt formidable *cenſor* to them; and the reſtraint you will lay them - der, muſt baniſh from their converſe all that IIce dom, gaiety and eaſe, in which they would naturally indulge themſelves before perſons of leſs account: nay, the very deſpair of ſucceeding, would hinder them even from attempting to render themſelves agreeable to men of a certain coldneſs in their manners, who are apt to examine every thing with the calmneſs of philoſophy, and will not permit themſelves a careleſs freedom in converſation. The eaſe and chearful ſweets of ſocial intercourſe, is only to be enjoyed among thoſe who are as heedleſs and unguarded as ourſelves, affording us the ſame reciprocal advantages over them.

In fine, too much circumſpection has the like effects upon our minds, that a cold air has upon our bodies. Reſerve ſhuts up the door of their hearts with whom we converſe, and makes them cautious how they unfold them. You muſt then beware, Marquis, of ſtriking a damp upon galantry, by affecting to exhibit yourſelf only in your moſt important light. You may have read that people more often pleaſe by agreeable failings, than by the moſt eſſential quulities. Great me-

rits

rits are like large pieces of gold, which we make leſs uſe of than of ſma er coin. (a)

This thought makes me recollect certain nations, who inſtead of ſterling metals, carry on their traffic intirely with ſhells. Now, prithee, don't you think theſe people are as rich as we, with all the bullion of the new world? One might at firſt, be apt to miſtake their riches for poverty, 'till we reflect that gold and ſilver receive their value from our opinion only; and that our coin, among thoſe people, would but ſerve for counters.

The qualities that you deem eſſential, are to ted after the ſame manner, in galantry: we have occaſion there, only for ſhells, and what ſignifies the medium of traffic, while the commerce is carried on?

My concluſion then, is fairly this. If it be true, which you cannot doubt, that your chief happineſs muſt ariſe from the ſociety of women, be aſſured that you can never render yourſelf agreeable to them, but by ſuch qualities as are analogous to their own.

I return again. You men affect to value yourſelves upon your ſciences, learning, judgment, &c. &c.——But tell me ingenuouſly, how irkſome would your lives become, if ye were condemned to be always rational, learned, ſolid, and to ſpend your time intirely among philoſophers? I know ye perfectly well; ye would grow very ſoon tired of admiring one another; and formed of

(a) Swift has the ſame expreſſion with regard to learned men: "Though they have quadruples in "their purſes, they are frequently at a loſs for ready "change."

Thoughts on Various Subjects.

of ſuch ſtuff as ye are, ye would more readily reſign your excellencies, than your pleaſures.

Therefore, prithee don't deceive yourſelf by endeavouring to paſs for a perſon of importance, in the ſenſe you miſtake it. True merit is that only, which is ſo eſteemed by thoſe we would deſire to pleaſe. Galantry has its peculiar laws, Marquis. Agreeable fellows are the only *ſages* of that province.

Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

I Perceive, Marquis, that you have not very far to travel. Your hour is arrived at laſt. The account you give of yourſelf, ſufficiently proves you to be at length, in love: and the young widow you mention, is indeed very capable of inſpiring that paſſion. The Chevalier de * * * * has given me a very advantageous deſcription of her. But the moment you begin to be ſenſible of the leaſt inquietude, you reproach me for the advice I have given you! The uneaſineſs that ariſes in our breaſts, with the other evils occaſioned by love, appear you ſay, more to be dreaded, than all its pleaſures are to be deſired.

There are, 'tis true, a ſober kind of people, who think the pains, at leaſt equal to the joys. But not to enter into a tedious diſquiſition on this ſubject, let me offer you my own opinion about the matter. Love then, is a paſſion, or emotion of the ſoul, neither good or evil in its own nature: it

it reſts intirely upon the experience of its votaries who according as they have been differently affected, reſolve it, ſome into an evil, and others into a good.

All that I need ſay in its favour, is, that it is attended with one circumſtance, which all the inconveniences imputed to it, cannot be able to counterpoiſe. It relieves us from ſupineneſs, it quic ens us, and is ſo far, of immediate advantage. I believe I told you before, that our hearts are formed for emotion; and whatever rouſes or actuates them, may be ſaid to anſwer the deſign f nature. Oh! what is life, without the relief o love? A tedious malady! 'Tis not exiſtence Vegetation only!

I ove is to our minds, what winds are to the ſea. They often raiſe ſtorms there indeed, and ſometimes occaſion ſhipwrecks: but then, 'tis they which render it navigable: and the very agitation they produce, is neceſſary to preſerve its virtues; (b) and if they render the voyage dangerous, 'tis the pilot's buſineſs to provide againſt the hazard.

I return to my ſubject: and though your delicacy may be offended at my frankneſs, I ſhall add, that beſides the neceſſity we labour under, of ſomething to keep us awake, we have within us, a certain phyſical and neceſſary cauſe of love. Perbaps it may not be proper for a woman to ſpeak this language to you. You know I do not ſpeak ſo plainy in general; but, we are not holding

(b) Philoſophers ſay, that if it was not for the fluctuation of the ocean, its ſalts would ſubſide, thereby rendering the waters unfit for that peculiar ſpecies of animals which are framed to inhabit them; and would ſtagnate, at leng h, to putrefaction.

ing a polite converſation——we are only philoſophiſing. If my propoſitions appear ſometimes too abſtruſe for a woman, remember what I told you in one of my former letters. (c) As ſoon as I was capable of reaſon, I took upon myſelf to examine which of the ſexes had the advantage; (d) and finding the diſtribution to lie moſtly in your favour, I immediately commenced *man*.

Under this character then, I need not enquire whether it is right or wrong to admit the paſſion of love: we might as well enter into a diſquiſition about thirſt; and caution all the world againſt drinking, becauſe ſome people are apt to get drunk. Since then, it is not a matter within you own election, whether you ſhall have an appetite conformable to the mechanical conſtruction of your natures, or no; away with romantic netions, and never perplex yourſelf with computations upon the more or leſs advantages of loving. Make uſe of this paſſion in the manner I have recommended to you——Let it be your *amuſement*——but never your *occupation*.

I expect

(c) Letter II. paragraph 1.

(d) *Had the advantage.* The French expreſſion is, etoit le mieux partage, which the former *traducer* of theſe letters, mentioned in my preface, without the leaſt authority from ſenſe or dictionary, renders thus, *was the moſt numerous*. But, the whole paſſage is in the ſame ſtile, and may amuſe the reader. Desq e j'ai fait uſage de ma raiſon, je me ſuis mis en tete d'examiner lequel des deux ſexes etoit le mieux partage: j'ai vu que les hommes ne s'etoient point du tout maltraites dans la diſtribution des roles, & je me ſuis faite *homme*. "Since the time I began to make "uſe of my reaſon, I have taken it into my head to "examine which of the two ſexes *was the moſt numerous*:

I expect here that you will overwhelm me again, with your high-flown principles, and tell me, that it is not in our power to arreſt the current of our affections at whatever point we may chuſe to limit them. But obſerve, that I conſider thoſe who talk after this manner, in the ſame light I do perſons who think themſelves obliged in honour to expreſs an hearty affliction on account of ſome loſs which other people perhaps, look upon to be very conſiderable. They know, at the ſame time, that they ought rather to take conſolation; but find a ſort of ſatisfaction in their grief. They love to feel that their hearts are capable of carrying a ſentiment to exceſs, and this reflection ſoftens them ſtill more. They nouriſh, they idolize their affliction, and render it incenſe from habit.

Juſt ſo ye ſublime lovers, with ſentiments overſtrained by prudery or romance, make it a point of honour with themſelves, to ſpiritualize their paſſion. From the reinforcements of delicacy they adopt a kind of galant ſuperſtition, to which they are more ſtrongly devoted, as it is a religion of their own making. In fine, they become at length aſhamed of deſcending to common ſenſe, and appearing rational creatures.

Prithee

" *merous*: I have obſerved that yours had no reaſon
" to complain of being ill uſed in the diſtribution of
" the *ſiſter*, and therefore I have thought it *no in-*
" *juſtice* to commence *a man*."

I wiſh heartily there was an attorney-general appointed in the republic of letters, to proſecute ſuch notorious offenders againſt the ſtate. To render them for ever incapable of holding any employ in literature; either as author, tranſlator, or even compiler, tranſcriber, printer, or prompter.

Prithee Marquis, do not ſuffer yourſelf to be hurried into ſuch ridiculous lengths as theſe. Such elevated notions are looked upon by the preſent age, as either fooliſh or affected. Formerly, they took it into their heads that love was to be a ſerious, a ſublime paſſion, and eſteemed only in proportion to its dignity—Give dignity to a child, and what will become of its graces? What a ridiculous and inconſiſtent character would you make of it!

I have really, vaſt compaſſion for our poor unfortunate anceſters. What was with them a languiſhing diſtemper, a melancholic madneſs, is among us, but a gay folly, or a pleaſant dream Bewitching as they were to prefer the horror or rocks and deſarts to all the beauties of a flowered parterre! What abſurd prejudices has the habit of reflection thrown to the ground!

To prove that ſuch ſublime conceptions are but the chimeras of prepoſſeſſion or pride, it need only be obſerved, that we no longer perceive any taſte now amongſt us, for that ſort of myſtic galantry, nor ever hear in the preſent times, of ſuch gigantic paſſions. Apply but ridicule to the beſt eſtabliſhed opinions, even to thoſe we think the moſt natural, and you will find that both one and the other ſhall often vaniſh away, and leave us aſtoniſhed that ſome ideas we had idolized in our minds, ſhould be found in truth, but empty notions, which took their turns of change, lil idle faſhions. (e)

Therefore

(e) Shafteſbury has propoſed *ridicule*, as a teſt of truth. Perhaps he had taken the hint from this paſſage, as theſe letters were publiſhed in his time: but he has carried the ſentiment too far. Every thing that is

Therefore good Marquis, do not alarm yourſelf with prophetic conjectures upon the event of your attachment to the charming Counteſs, and you will perceive in the end that love in reality, ſuch as can render us happy, inſtead of being conſidered as a very ſolemn affair, ſhould be treated as no ſerious matter at all; and particularly ought ever to be conducted with gaiety. Nothing will prove the truth of this maxim, better than the event of your adventure; for I fancy that the Counteſs is a woman by no means ſuſceptible of grave impreſſions, and your ſublime ſentiments will give her the vapours, remember I tell you

My diſorder continues ſtill. I had a great mind to tell you that I ſhall not go abroad all day: but would not this be a kind of aſſignation? However, if you will come and give me your opinion of Racine's Bajazet, I ſhall be very well pleaſed with your company. They ſay that La Chammelay (f) has excelled herſelf, in that performance.

I have read my letter over, Marquis, and it puts me out of humour with you. I find gravity is infectious; and you may judge how much your miſtreſs muſt have been affected with it, when you have communicated it to me, even while I was endeavouring to cure you of the diſtemper. There is ſomething ſingular in this, that to prove love

is not capable of mathematical certainty, may be made a ſubject of cavil; and yet there are *truths*, which cannot be *demonſtrated*. Moral philoſophy all men are agreed in, yet Ariſtophanes in his comedy of the *Clouds*, rendered Socrates the jeſt of Athens. Is every thing ridiculous, that a buffoon laughs at?

(f) A famous Actreſs.

love ought to be treated with chearfulneſs, I ſhould be obliged to aſſume a ſerious air.

Adieu.

LETTER IX.

YOU have taken what I ſaid in my laſt letter, moſt heinouſly ill? I have prophaned the divinity of love, and moſt impiouſly degraded the dignity, by reducing his empire to a vulgar appetite. As for you Marquis you have more elevated notions of this paſſion: what paſſes in your own breaſt is a proof of it. You have no ſort of ſenſation beyond that pure and delicate affection which occupies your whole ſoul. *To behold the Counteſs, to hold tender converſe with her, to liſten to the ſoft melody of her voice, to render her little aſſiduities*—Theſe, the only ſcope and extent of your wiſhes; and theſe alone, ſufficient to conſtitute your ſupreme felicity. Far be it from you thoſe vulgar ſentiments I ſo unworthily ſubſtitue in the place of your ſublime metaphyſics: thoughts only bccoming of terreſtrial minds, attached ſimply to the groſs pleaſures of ſenſe? What an error muſt I be in! Could I imagine the Counteſs a woman to be won, by motives ſo unworthy of her? and to give the leaſt hint of ſuch mean ſentiments in yourſelf, would it not be to expoſe you to her ſcorn, her hatred, &c. &c.

My philoſophy then, has given you to apprehend all theſe ſad misfortunes—My poor Marquis! How have you deceived yourſelf by your ignorance of the genuine cauſe of your ſentiments! Will you lend me your whole attention? I would

I would reſcue you from an error: but with that ſolemn air that is anſwerable to the great importance of the ſubject I am entering upon. I mount the tripod! I feel the preſence of the Deity! I am inſpired! I rub my forehead, like one who meditates deep myſteries, and am juſt going to pronounce oracles! Let us reaſon in form.

Mankind, from I know not what caprice, have affixed a certain ſhame to that reciprocal inclination which nature has given to the ſexes. They were ſenſible, however that they could not abſolutely ſtifle its voice. What's to be done in ſo difficult a caſe? Why truly, they endeavoured to ſubſtitute the outward ſhew of an affection purely ſpiritual, to to the humbling neceſſity of appearing honeſtly to ſatisfy an appetite. Inſenſibly they became accuſtomed to occupy themſelves in a thouſand *little ſublime nothings*.—But did not ſtop here—For at length, they began really to believe that all this *acceſſary* trifling, effects of an overheated imagination, conſtituted the intire eſſence of this paſſion. Behold now, love elevated among heroics! At leaſt, they have lent it the appearance of one: but, let us break through the impoſition, and take an example.

Two lovers at the commencement of their amour, imagine themſelves inſpired with the moſt delicate ſentiments: they exhauſt all the refinements, the exaggerations and enthuſiaſm of the higheſt ſeraphics; and are for a time, enamoured with the idea of their own excellence. But, let us attend them thro' the whole courſe of their connection, and we ſhall ſoon perceive that nature will call in for its ſhare. In a ſhort time their vanity, ſatisfied with the ſhew of theſe *alembic* notior , leaves the heart at liberty to feel

and

and explain its real ſentiments, and notwithſtanding their refined contempt for the vulgar pleaſures of ſenſe, a time will come when this pair of platonics may be much ſurpriſed to find themſelves, after a tedious circuit, at the ſame point with the moſt ordinary peaſant, who would honeſtly have begun where they left off.

Retrieve yourſelf then, from your error: abandon your chimera: keep your refined ſentiments intirely for friendſhip. Set no higher value upon love, than what it deſerves. The more dignity you allow it the more dangerous it becomes; and the more ſublime your ideas of it riſe, the farther they are from being juſt.

Take a perſon's word for it, who is perfectly acquainted with the human heart. "If a man "thinks, ſays he, that he loves his miſtreſs for "her ſake only, he is extremely miſtaken. (g)

(g) ochefaucault.

LETTER

LETTER X.

THE diſcourſe, then, that the Counteſs held with you, upon the delicacy which ſhe required in a lover, has ſtartled you. You imagine ſhe will always be as ſevere as ſhe appears to you at preſent. All I have ſaid is not ſufficient to keep up your ſpirits. You think you do me faviour in barely doubting of my maxims. If you dare ſpeak out, you will condemn them entirely.

I believe you in earneſt, when you ſpeak after this manner. It is not your fault if you do not ſee clearly into the buſineſs you are about: but in proportion as you advance, the cloud will diſſipate, and you will perceive with ſurpriſe the truths I had before pronounced to you.

While your paſſion remains temperate at leaſt, before it has attained to that degree of confidence, to which its progreſs will conduct you, every thing appears ſerious: the hope of the leaſt favour is a crime: one does not permit themſelves the moſt innocent freedoms without trembling. At firſt one ſollicits nothing, or ſo ſmall a matter, that a woman thinks in juſtice, ſhe ſhould accord it to you, in conſideration of your extreme modeſty: to obtain this trifle, one promiſes never to require more: yet, in the inſtant of making ſuch proteſtations, they are inſenſibly gaining ground, and becoming more familiar: ſhe permits this idle dalliance, as of ſo little conſequence, that ſhe would ſuffer it in almoſt any man of her intimate acquaintance.

But at length what ſeemed to be of ſmall import to d upon compariſon with what paſſed yeſ-

yeſterday, would appear very conſiderable, when compared to the liberties that were at firſt permitted. A woman rendered confident, by your diſcretion, cannot eaſily perceive the inſenſible gradation of her own weakneſs. She is ſo ſelf ſufficient, and the ſlight favours ſolicited for the preſent, appear ſo eaſy to be refuſed, that ſhe too haſtily concludes the ſame ſtrength will remain when any thing of more conſequence ſhall be attempted. I have not yet ſufficiently expreſſed myſelf—ſhe even flatters herſelf that her reſiſtance will increaſe in proportion to the importance of the favours required.

Women have often ſuch a reliance on their virtue, that they ſometimes provoke danger, by daring it: they eſſay their ſtrength, and have a curioſity to try how far a few ſlight freedoms are able to carry them. How imprudent to accuſtom their minds to ſuch ideas as are capable of undoing them in the end! What way do they often make, before they diſcover they have ſtirred out of the ſpot? and if upon reflection, they are themſelves ſurpriſed at having yielded ſo far, the lover is ſometimes, no leſs ſo, at having obtained ſo much.

I may carry this matter further; for I am convinced from many inſtances, that a woman may ſometimes be overcome, even without love or looſe deſire. I knew a lady once, who though perfectly amiable, had never ſhewn the leaſt turn or diſpoſition toward galantry. Fifteen years marriage had not in the leaſt abated her fondneſs for her huſband, and this mutual affection was become a proverb among their acquaintance.

One evening at their country houſe, ſome friends ſtaid ſo late, that they were obliged to lye

there. In the morning her maids were employed in attendance on the ſeveral ladies in their bed-chambers, and ſhe was left alone in her dreſſing-room. A gentleman who was intimate in the family, and whom ſhe had always looked upon as a perſon of no manner of conſequence happened to call into the room, to pay her the compliments of the morning.

He aſſiſted her in little offices at the toilette: the deſhabille in which he found her, naturally afforded him an occaſion of paying ſome galant compliments upon her charms remaining ſtill unimpaired; which ſhe paſſed off with a ſmile, as mere words of courteſy. From one gay ſubject to another; from beauty to love, to galantry: they toyed, they romped, they ſtruggled: ſome ſlight attempt, at firſt neither premeditated on one ſide; nor apprehended on the other, became at laſt a deciſive event. She was *taken by ſurpriſe*, before ſhe found herſelf *beſieged*.

What muſt have been the aſtoniſhment of each, upon ſuch an unforeſeen adventure! they have neither of them ſince been able to account for it how they could have been both hurried ſo far on the inſtant, without having had the leaſt thought, inclination, or deſign, toward an amour, the very moment, or indeed any moment of their lives before.

Here we may cry out. "Vain mortals, who "put ſuch confidence in your virtue: whatever "roſolution you may boaſt, know that there are "*unlucky minutes*, when the moſt chaſte may be-"come moſt frail! the reaſon of which extra-"ordinary criſis is, that nature never ſleeps, and "always labours to carry its point. Appetite is "part of our ſubſtance: virtue is only a piece of

inlaid-

" *inlaid-work*, which requires an equal tempe-
" rature to prevent from *warping*.

The diſcourſe that the charming Counteſs held with you then, might be really ſincere—Though upon ſuch occaſions, women are apt to exaggerate a little—but ſhe deceives herſelf, if ſhe imagines ſhe will be able to perſevere to the end, in ſuch ſtrict and *ſuperfine* ſentiments. Be aſſured, that ſuch *metaphſicians* differ not in the mean, from the reſt of their ſex. Their outward appearances are more plauſible, and their moral more auſtere; but examine their actions, and you'll find that their engagements always conclude after the ſame manner as theirs who do not pretend to very elevated affections. They ſet up a ſolt of hereſy for themſelves, and as I ſaid, one day, to the Queen of Sweden, " theſe are your *Janſeniſts* " in love." (h)

You ſought then, Marquis, to know how to rate whatever women ſay to you upon the ſubject of galantry. All theſe fine ſyſtems which they make ſo pompous a diſplay of, are but airy phantoms, they would amuſe thoſe who are eaſily impoſed upon. To a man of any underſtanding, this heap of ſtudied phraſes is a mere parade, which he makes a jeſt of, and never hinders him from penetrating their real ſentiments.

The hard things they ſay of love; the reſiſtance they oppoſe to it; the little inclination they affect for its pleaſures; the cautious meaſures they ſeem to take againſt the paſſion; the apprehenſions they expreſs about it—All theſe, do they not proceed from love alone? This is to ren-

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(h) The Janſeniſts are a reformed ſect in France, that ſets up for purer doctrines than the reſt of the Roman Catholics.

der him homage after their manner: it is to be entirely occupied about him. He knows how to vary his form with them: like pride, he rises from his own defeat, and appears to be conquered, only to fix his empire more sure.

My stars! what a letter is here! But to excuse the length of it, would be to make it longer.

Adieu.

WHEN

WHEN the reader has finiſhed the above letter, he may almoſt imagine I had not ſeen it 'till it preſented itſelf in the order of this tranſlation. For certainly, he will have good reaſon to ſay, that the inſerting it in my preface, might have ſaved me the expence of any farther apology for publiſhing this collection. Could the beſt moraliſt, or ſevereſt prude, point out the folly of confidence, or the hazard of dalliance, in a ſtronger manner than l'Enclos has done in this writing? This is the free-eſt letter in the whole *ſet*; and yet, is there ſcarce a paragraph in it that might not ſupply a theſis for a boarding-ſchool lecture?

LETTER XI.

I AM pleaſed with your letter, Marquis: would you know why? It affords me a ſpeaking proof of the truths I have been inſtructing you in, for ſome time paſt. I find you have, at length, relinquiſhed your metaphyſics, and ſpeak of the charms of your Counteſs, with a certain warmth that betrays your ſentiments to be not quite ſo refined as you would have me believe, nor as perhaps you really imagined them yourſelf.

Tell me honeſtly, if love was not an effect of our ſenſes, would you with ſo much pleaſure contemplate that mien, thoſe eyes, thoſe teeth, thoſe lips, you deſcribe in ſo inraptured a ſtrain? If the qualities of her mind and underſtanding only, had made the conqueſt of your heart, a woman of fifty years of age, perhaps, would have ſerved better

for this purpoſe, than the Counteſs. You ſee ſuch a one every day; 'tis her mother. Prithee, why don't you fall in love with her? Why do you neglect an hundred women of her age, of her homelineſs, and her *merit*, who make advances to you, and would play the ſame formal part with you, that you perform before the Counteſs?

Beſides, why do you deſire with ſo much earneſtneſs, to be diſtinguiſhed by her from any other man? Why ſo uneaſy whenever ſhe ſhews the leaſt manner of civility to any one elſe? Her eſteem for others, would it diminiſh that which ſhe may have conceived for you? Are there jealouſies, are there ivalſhips in metaphyſics? None, that ever I heard of. I have friends myſelf, and I am not in the leaſt uneaſy when they pay there addreſſes to any other woman.

Friendſhip is a ſentiment that has no dependence on the ſenſes: the ſoul alone receives the impreſſion, and the mind loſes nothing of its value, by yielding itſelf to ſeveral at the ſame time. Make a compariſon, between this and love, and you will quickly perceive the difference between a lover and a friend. You will then acknowledge, that I am not, after all, ſo abſurd as you thought me at firſt, and that you cannot yourſelf boaſt a heart leſs vulgar than the generality of plain, honeſt ſort of people, whom you have been pleaſed to cenſure for their want of delicacy in this point.

I would not, however, bring the charge againſt men only: I am frank, and am very certain, that if women would be ingenuous, they might likewiſe confeſs, that they are not themſelves, in any ſort more *ſeraphic*, in this particular. If they imagined nothing more in love than the pleaſures of intellect, and hoped to pleaſe by ſenſe and character

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ter alone, why endeavour with ſuch aſſiduous pains to charm by the beauty and ornament of their face and perſons? What have a fine complexion, an elegant form, a graceful fall in the ſhoulders, to do with the ſoul? What a contradiction here, between their real ſentiments, and thoſe they affect to make parade of! *See them*, and you will be convinced that their whole deſign is to be admired for their outward attractions; making very little account of any thing further. *Hear them*, and they would impoſe on your belief, that their form and features are things which they held in the ſlighteſt eſteem.

But I am, perhaps, too officious in endeavouring to diſſipate your error in this matter. Might I not leave it to their own induſtry to clear up this point to you? They would very ſhortly, give you ſufficient reaſon for changing your preſent ſentiments, with regard to this particular.

I am to paſs this evening with Madame de Raymond, to hear the two Camus's, and Ytier, perform in concert together. Meſdames de la Sabliere, de Salins, and de Monſoreau, with Madame de Fienne, are to be there. Will you neglect ſo agreeable a party?

LETTER XII.

'TIS taking things moſt grievouſly to heart, Marquis! Two whole nights without cloſing your eyes; This is love with a vengeance! One can have no longer the leaſt doubt upon that point. You have made your lips and eyes declare your paſſion in the moſt explicit manner; and yet ſhe has not condeſcended to yield the leaſt attention to your unhappy ſtate! Such injuſtice cries aloud for vengeance! Is it poſſible, that after eight days intire, of ſighs and aſſiduities, ſhe could be ſo heard-hearted as to refuſe you even a glimpſe of hope? 'Tis really what one cannot have the leaſt notion of. So long a reſiſtance will never paſs for an hiſtorical fact. The Counteſs is an heroine in romance. But, if you begin to loſe patience already, conſider what you might have ſtill to ſuffer, if you had continued your former refined ſentiments—You have gained more ground already, in thoſe ſame eight days you complain of, than the *late Celadon* would have done, in as many months.

But, to ſpeak ſeriouſly to you: is there any manner of juſtice now, in your complaints? You ſtile the Counteſs ungrateful, inſenſible, ſcornful, &c. But prithee, tell me what right you have to charge her ſo ſeverely? Will you pay no ſort of attention to what I have ſo often repeated to you? Love is a very caprice, involuntary in the perſon whoſe heart is affected by it. Now anſwer me, why ſhould you think one is obliged to any kind of gratitude, for a blind ſentiment that has happened to ſeize you, without your own choice, or

their

their concurrence? There is ſomething ſingular in you men! you reſent it as an offence, if women do not return immediately the fond regards you *condeſcend* to beſtow upon them: your revolted pride accuſes them at once, of injuſtice, as if it were their fault that your heads were turned; and that they were under a ſort of moral obligation of being ſeized, at a certain given time, with the ſame diſorder that you yourſelves happened to be afflicted with.

Is the Counteſs, I pray you, anſwerable for it, if her brain does not feel itſelf affected, at the ſame inſtant you begin to rave? Ceaſe then, either to accuſe her, or lament yourſelf. Endeavour to communicate your own malady to her I know you very well: you are engaging enough —perhaps, ſhe may too ſoon for her repoſe, conceive ſuch ſentiments towards you, as you could wiſh. Finally, I think that ſhe has every quality neceſſary to make an intire conqueſt of your heart, and to inſpire you with ſuch a taſte, as may be requiſite to render you happy.

I do not imagine her capable of a ſerious attachment. Lively, careleſs, peremptory, and capricious, ſhe will probably afford you a good deal of work on your hands. A woman of an attentive, fond diſpoſition, would ſuffer you to fall aſleep. You muſt be treated with military diſcipline, to rouſe and preſerve you in a proper ſtate of life. Let a miſtreſs once play the part of a lover, and ſhe will ſoon find herſelf neglected——perhaps worſe——The ſubject riſes to a tyrant——treats her with a kind of careleſsneſs, or contempt, which leads finally, to inconſtancy, and diſguſt.

You have then, luckily met with every thing you wanted, in the charming fair who cauſes your preſent

preſent moſt dolorous martyrdom. The poor Marquis! What a ſiege of troubles lie before him! How many ſquabbles do I foreſee! What piques, what reſolves to quit her! But remember well, that all theſe difficulties will become a real torment, while you continue to treat love like an hero of romance, and that they will be rather the *ſeaſonings* of your pleaſures, if you conduct yourſelf like a rational creature.

Should I not ceaſe from writing to you? The moments that you loſe in reading my letters, are they not ſo many *petty larcenies* in love? What an entertainment would it afford me to be a witneſs of your ſituation! in reality, for an unconcerned ſpectator, can there be a more amuſing object in the world, than the emotions of a man in love?

Farewel.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

YOU ſeem to reſent it, Marquis, that I ſhould treat the ſituation you are in after ſo ludicrous a manner: you would have me conſider your preſent circumſtances as a very ſerious buſineſs; but I cannot aſſume ſo much gravity all on the ſudden. Don't you obſerve, that my way of dealing with you is agreeable to the principles I had before laid down? I ſpeak lightly of a matter which I eſteem a trifle, or a meer amuſement: when we are upon a buſineſs of conſequence to your real happineſs, you ſhall find me then aſſume a character proper for the occaſion.

I have not, in truth, the leaſt kind of pity for you, becauſe I do not perceive any thing in your caſe which need move compaſſion. With a proper philoſophy in this matter, what appears to you a pain, would become a pleaſure. If you would ſucceed, uſe my preſcriptions, and I warrant their effect. Let us proceed now to the ſecond article of your letter.

You are the more ſurprized, you ſay, at the coldneſs and reſerve of the Counteſs, as you do not believe them ſincere: If I underſtand you, this conjecture is framed from the indiſcretion of her friends. The advantageous things you hear ſhe has ſaid of you, even gave riſe to the firſt ſentiments you conceived for her. This ſtroke is extremely like you men. The leaſt favourable word that eſcapes a woman, immediately inclines them to believe ſhe has ſome deſign or other upon them. They attribute this conqueſt at once, to their own merit; vanity turns the ſlighteſt food to nouriſhment.

riſhment. If one was to examine ye cloſely, they would find that ye frequently love out of gratitude: and women in their turn, are not much wiſer in this particular. So that galantry is a kind of commerce, where we would, each of us, have the other party advance to us; and love to think ourſelves in each others debt: and you know that true ſpirit is always more ready to pay, than beſtow.

However, are we not apt to impoſe upon ourſelves ſometimes? How often does it appear that perſons who imagine they are but diſcharging an obligation, are in reality, making the firſt advances? If two lovers would ſincerely explain themſelves upon the riſe and progreſs of their paſſion, what curious kind of confeſſions ſhould we have! Attend.

Eliza, to whom Valerio happened to addreſs a meer compliment of courſe, returned it perhaps undeſignedly, with a look and manner as if it had wrought a greater effect upon her mind than ſuch common-place civilities uſually do. This was enough: Valerio quickly changes his note: his general complaiſance reſolves itſelf at once, into particular regards: their mutual warmth inſenſibly increaſes, the fire is lighted, it blazes out, and behold a paſſion in form.

Now, if any one ſhould tell Eliza, that ſhe had commenced this amour, that ſhe had herſelf made the firſt advance, nothing could appear to her more unjuſt; and yet nothing is more true, at the ſame time.

I conclude from thence, that in a proper ſenſe, love is leſs the effect of that invincible ſympathy ſo often pleaded, than of our own vanity. Obſerve the riſe of all ſuch attachments, and you'll find them proceed from the mutual praiſes we

beſtow

beſtow upon each other. It has been ſaid, that folly is the ſource of love.—But give me leave to aſſure you, it is flattery and that there is no inſpiring the heart of a fine woman with this paſſion, 'till you have firſt paid your tribute to her vanity.

To all which you may add, that the ſtrong inclination we naturally have to love, is the reaſon alſo of ſome illuſion in this caſe. As *enthuſiaſts* by the ſole force of imagination, fancy they ſee in reality, thoſe objects toward which their ſuperſtition is attracted; in like manner, we perſuade our minds frequently, into a belief of thoſe ſentiments in others, which we would wiſh to inſpire them with ourſelves.

Have a care then, Marquis, not to impoſe upon yourſelf by wrong conceptions. The Counteſs might have ſpoken favourably of you, ſolely with the innocent deſign of rendering juſtice to your merit, without any farther view; and you may perhaps, be returning her an act of injuſtice, by ſuſpecting her of inſincerity with regard to her preſent conduct toward you.

But after all, why ſhould you not permit her to diſſemble her inclinations in your favour, if you have really inſpired her with any? Have not women *a preſcriptive* right for concealing their ſentiments from men? and does not the ungenerous advantages they are too apt to take of their fondneſs for them, ſufficiently juſtify ſuch a conduct?

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

NO, Marquis—the curioſity of Madame de Sevigné (a) has not given me any manner of offence. On the contrary, I am very well ſatisfied that ſhe ſhould ſee every letter I write to you. She was certainly of opinion before, that if my correſpondence was upon the ſubject of galantry, it muſt have been intirely upon my account. But ſhe has now found out her miſtake. She may perceive by this inſtance, that I am not ſo high as ſhe imagined; and I believe her to be ingenuous enough to conceive for the future, a different idea of Ninon than ſhe has had for ſome time paſt.

However that may be, her injuſtice ſhall have no ſort of influence upon my friendſhip for you. I am philoſopher enough not to be uneaſy about the opinions of thoſe who take the liberty to judge of without knowing me. Whatever may happen I ſhall continue to write to you with my uſual frankneſs; and am perſuaded that Madame de Sevigné, notwithſtanding her extreme delicacy, will be upon the whole, more often of my opinions, than ſhe will have ſincerity enough to acknowledge.

I come now to what relates perſonally to yourſelf Well, Marquis, after a world of pains and aſſiduities, you think at laſt, that you have been able to ſoften this heart of adamant. I am really tranſported at your ſucceſs. But cannot help ſmiling to find you interpret the ſentiments of the Counteſs, after the manner you do. You partake with the reſt of

(a) His Mother.

of your ſex, an error which it may be neceſſary to undeceive you from, however flattering it may be in the contemplation.

Ye conclude, one and all of ye, that your peculiar merits alone inſpire this paſſion in our hearts, and that your ſuperior qualities of mind and underſtanding are the ſole cauſes of the love we conceive for you. What a miſtake is here! But vanity is anſwerable for it all. Examine without prepoſſeſſion, if poſſible, what is the real motive that determines yourſelves in ſuch engagements, and you will be ſoon convinced that you deceive yourſelf, that we impoſe upon you alſo, that all things properly conſidered you are the dupes of your own ſelf-ſufficience, as well as of ours; and that the merits of the beloved object are nothing more than the *occaſion* or *pretence* of love, and not its *efficient cauſe*. In ſhort that all this ſublime theory, generally pleaded on the part of either, muſt ultimately be referred to the natural inſtinct which I formerly propoſed, as the *firſt mover* in this paſſion.

I have told you indeed a harſh and mortifying truth, but it is not the leſs certain for its ſeverity. Women enter into life with this inclination undetermined; and if they chuſe one man in preference to another, let them honeſtly confeſs that they yield leſs to a knowledge of his merit, than to a certain blind and mechanical impulſe.

Need there be a ſtronger proof of this matter, than thoſe indiſcreet paſſions we are ſometimes bewitched with, for perſons abſolutely unknown to us; or at leaſt, for men whom we are not ſufficiently acquainted with, to be proper judges of their merits; and where, if we hit right, muſt be the ſole effect of hazard We generally attach

tach our affections, without any ſort of precaution; and it was a true parallel to compare love to an appetite, which one is frequently ſenſible of for one ſort of food rather than another, without being able to account for ſuch a preference.

It is very cruel in me to diſſipate the chimera's of your vanity; but the truth will out. You are flattered with being loved, becauſe you imagine it ſuppoſes ſome conſiderable merit in the object beloved. But you compliment this paſſion too much, I aſſure you; or rather, you have too good an opinion of yourſelves. Believe me, it is not for your ſakes that we are foud of you: to be ſincere in love, we ſollicit only our own pleaſure. Caprice, intereſt, vanity, conſtitution, or the getting rid of that *wearineſs* which oppreſſes us while the heart remains void of attachment.—Some one, or more, of theſe mean principles, are the ſource of all thoſe elevated ſentiments we are ſo apt to deify.

In truth, they are not your moſt heroic qualities which engage our affections; if they happen to enter into account among the reaſons that determine us in your favour, it is not the heart which receives the impreſſion, but our pride: and the greateſt part of thoſe things that render you agreeable to us, properly rated, would render you deſpicable, or ridiculous perhaps, in another place.

Thus it is. We are fond of an admirer who will entertain us with the idea of our own excellence; we need ſome ſubmiſſive ſubject to exerciſe dominion over; or, to ſpeak more plainly, our minds may have conceived a turn for galantry. Chance preſents us with one lover, inſtead of another: we accept rather than chuſe him. You fancy yourſelves the object of diſintereſted affections: you imagine that women love you for

your

your ſakes alone.—Silly dupes ! yo 1 are but the miniſter of their pleaſures, or the ſlave of their caprices.

But, to do them juſtice, they are themſelves, to the full as ignorant in this matter. The truths I here reveal, have no more enlightened their underſtanding, than they have yours. On the contrary, with all poſſible ingenuouſneſs they really imagine themſelves determined and governed intirely, by thoſe ſublime notions that both your vanity and their own have equally inſpired ye with; and it would be, therefore, the height of injuſtice to tax them with any manner of inſincerity, in this particular: for without the leaſt conſciouſneſs of the matter, they firſt deceive themſelves and then impoſe on you.

You ſee, Marquis, that I here betray to you the ſecrets of the *Bona Dea* ; judge of my friendſhip, when I endeavour to inſtruct you, at the expence of my own ſex. The more you comprehend the nature of women, the fewer follies you will be led into on their Accounts.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XV.

TRULY, Marquis, I am ſurpriſed how you can ſupport the ſevere manner in which I reaſon with you ſometimes. I ſeem to have no other view but to chace away agreeable *illuſions*, and ſubſtitute mortifying *realities* in their ſtead. I ſhould certainly endeavour to break myſelf of my uſual way of philoſophiſing upon every occaſion. I am as ſenſible as any one can be, that one pleaſes more by flattering deceits, than by the ſoundeſt logic. But my character forces its way in ſpight of me. Nay, I perceive, even at this inſtant, an auxiliary of philoſophy marching up to augment my forces, and you muſt collect all yours, to withſtand the *broad-ſide* of moral we are preparing to ſalute you with. When this is over, I may promiſe you ſome relaxation. I have laid your letter before me, and ſhall return you a full anſwer to it.

No ſir—I will not abate one tittle of it.—You may diſpute with me as long as you pleaſe, upon the ſlight opinion I ſeem to have of my own ſex.—It is my fault, I pray you, if they ſupply me with mortifying truths to relate? Beſides, Marquis, don't you know that the perſon in the world who thinks worſe of a woman, is — a woman?

However to juſtify myſelf ſeriouſly, from the notions you have conceived of my opinions, I muſt aſſure you, that I am neither envious, nor unjuſt. If I named my own ſex in my laſt letter, rather than yours, do not imagine it was in order to cenſure them in particular. I only meant to ſhew you, that without being more to blame than men,

men, they are, however, more dangerous; becauſe they are better accuſtomed to conceal their real ſentiments. In ſhort, you confeſs, ſooner than they can be brought to do; what is your principal object in love.

Notwithſtanding, when they aſſure you, as I ſaid before, that their choice has no other than a knowledge and approbation of your ſenſe and merits, I am perſuaded that they think themſelves ſincere. I even make no doubt, but that when they happen to perceive the leaſt indelicacy in their minds upon this ſubject, they exert their whole ſophiſtry to diſguiſe it from themſelves. But the motives I have hinted to you, exiſt nevertheleſs in the bottom of their hearts: they are not leſs the true cauſes of their attachment toward you, and whatever effort they may make, to flatter themſelves that they are determined by meer ſpiritual reaſons, their vanity in this particular has not the power of altering the real nature of things. They endeavour to conceal their diſgrace in this point, as they would take care to hide bad teeth, which diſfigure a ſet of features, otherwiſe perfect enough. Even when they are alone, they are afraid to open their mouths; and the habit of diſguiſing this blemiſh from others, and themſelves, brings them at length to forget it intirely, or to paſs it by as a matter of no conſequence.

In truth, I agree with you, that both one and the other of us would be conſiderable looſers, ſhould we affect to ſhew ourſelves to each other, as we are really in nature. The world have agreed to act a farce together, and to exhibit *ourſelves*, would be to quit the actor, and ſubſtitute the genuine character, inſtead of the *dramatis per-*

perſonæ. Let us then revel in the enchantment, without ſtriving to inveſtigate the ſpell that charms and bewitches us. To anatomize love, is to annihilate it. *Pſyche* loſt it by her curioſity. I take this fable to be a leſſon againſt analizing our pleaſures.

Let me ſtand corrected thus far; that if I ſaid it was a miſtake in you, to be vain upon our preference, and that ye have not much to boaſt of from the motives which determine us in your favour, I have to add here, that we are ourſelves as much deceived, if we imagine thoſe ſublime conceits you ſtuff your amorous vows with, are produced by the influence of our charms, or the impreſſion of our merit.

How often do we find that men who accoſt women with the moſt reſpectable air, who diſplay ſuch delicate ſentiments, ſo flattering to their vanity, before them; in a word, who appear to breathe only through them, to live for them alone, and to form no other deſire but for their honour and happineſs: how often, I ſay, are ſuch men guided by motives the very reverſe of all theſe pompous notions. Read and ſtudy the hearts of theſe *good creatures*, and you ſhall find in the breaſt of one, inſtead of that diſintereſted paſſion he is profeſſing, but groſs deſire: in another, a vanity about an alliance with your family, or an avarice for your fortune; and a third may be determined by reaſons even ſtill more mortifying; to raiſe perhaps, the jealouſy of ſome other woman whom he loves better, ſeeming only attached to you, in order to render you a public ſacrifice to your triumphant rival.

But in truth, the heart is an inſoluble riddle—a ſtrange compound of contradictions! We imagine,

gine, we know what passes there—we see the effect, quite ignorant of the cause. Let us favourably suppose that it even expresses its sentiments with sincerity; yet this very sincerity is not to be depended upon. Its motions may arise from springs quite different from those it may be immediately conscious of: and in truth, neither man or woman really know what principle it is that governs or directs their tastes or passions.

But upon the whole, they have made the best of it: they explain every thing to their own advantage; supply the deficiency of genuine, by assumed merit, and accumstom themselves, as I think I said before, to deify their vain imaginations. As all the world find their account in such deception, nobody sets about reforming it, nor even of examining whether it be an error, or no.

Farewel——if you pass this evening with me, you shall meet with company whose gaiety will make you amends for the seriousness of this lecture.

LET-

LETER XVI.

CAN it be poſſible, Marquis? Does the Counteſs really continue inflexible ſtill? The careleſs air with which ſhe receives your addreſſes, declares an indifference that drives you to deſpair!

Perhaps I may be able to ſift this enigma for you.——I know you well: you are gay, lively, and capable of appearing to advantage before women you have no manner of attachment to: but where your affections happen to be in the leaſt engaged——I have remarked it——you immediately grow timorous. Such behaviour may perchance, win the heart of a country girl: one muſt uſe another ſort of addreſs with women of faſhion.

The Counteſs knows the world——Take my advice: reſign your ſublime theorems and elevated ſentiments to the *Celadons* of the age: leave them to ſpin out ſuch ſubtile ſyſtems. I can aſſure you, on the part of women, that there are few among us that would not chuſe to be rather briſkly, than too gently dealt with. Men loſe more women by their timidity, than virtue ſaves.

The more awe a lover betrays, the more he intereſts our pride to inſpire him with it: the more apprehenſion he ſeems to have about our reſiſtance, the more reſpect we exact from him. If we were to ſpeak our minds, we ſhould cry out, "For pity ſake, do not ſuppoſe us ſo inexo-
"rable! You lay us under the neceſſity of ap-
"pearing ſo. Do not ſet our conqueſt at ſo high
"a rate:

" a rate: forbear to conſider our defeat as an in-
" ſuperable difficulty: accuſtom us by degrees to
" ſee you doubt our indifference: very often the
" ſureſt means to be beloved, is to appear per-
" ſuaded that one is already ſo."

An unreſerved, careleſs manner of behaviour, ſets our mind at eaſe. When we perceive a lover, though appearing ſatisfied of our regard, ſtill continues to treat us with the reſpect our vanity requires, we are apt to draw a haſty concluſion that he will behave in the ſame manner after we have given him more certain proofs of our affection.

What confidence does not this inſpire us with? What progreſs may he not flatter himſelf to make? But, ſhould he afford us the leaſt hint to keep upon our guard, it is not then our hearts we have to defend, it is not our virtue you have then to combat——'Tis our pride——and this, believe me, is the greateſt enemy you have to conquer, in women.

In ſhort, we endeavour to hide it even from ourſelves, that we have permitted you to addreſs us. Leave it in a woman's power to equivocate with herſelf, ſuffer her to pretend that ſhe has yielded to a ſort of violence or ſurprize, let her perceive your eſteem to keep equal pace with your love, and I will anſwer to you for her heart.

Treat the Counteſs according to her own character. She is full of gaiety and mirth, and one muſt in ſome ſort, play the fool to win her. Let her not even perceive that ſhe diſtinguiſhes you from other men; be always chearful as ſhe is lively, and you will fix your empire in her heart, before you warn her of your deſign. She will love you for ſome time, without perceiving it herſelf,

and

and will at once be ſurpriſed to find how far her paſſion has advanced, without her being ſenſible even of its firſt movement.

Adieu.

LETTER XVII.

YOU will probably, think me more inhuman even than the Counteſs. She is the author indeed, of all your miſery; but I carry my cruelty farther, by ſporting with your diſtreſs. Oh, how I ſympathize in your griefs! No perſon can be more intereſted in them, and your ſituation appears moſt lamentable to me! For how can one make an explicit declaration of love to a woman who ſeems to take a malicious pleaſure in evading every opportunity of the kind? Sometimes ſhe appears moved with compaſſion: and at others, quite inattentive to every thing you do to pleaſe her. She liſtens readily, and replies with chearfulneſs to the compliments and gay addreſſes of a certain Chevalier, who is but a *petit-maitre* in galantry; while to you ſhe anſwers ſeriouſly, or with an abſent air. If you ſpeak to her in a tender and affecting ſtile ſhe paſſes you off after ſome ſlight manner, or immediately changes the diſcourſe. All which inquiets intimidates, and drives you to deſpair.

The poor Marquis! But I do moſt aſſuredly promiſe you, that all this betokens a true and real paſſion. The abſent manner ſhe affects before you, and the heedleſs air with which ſhe diſtinguiſhes her ſentiments, ought to convince you

you, that in effect, ſhe is very far from being indifferent.

But your want of courage, the conſequences ſhe apprehends from ſuch a paſſion as yours, the ſympathy ſhe already feels, with your ſituation, all theſe alarm her: and 'tis you in reality, that fetter and conſtrain her behaviour. A little more reſolution on your part, would ſoon ſet ye both at liberty. Remember what Monſieur de la Rochefaucault ſaid to you lately; "A man of "ſenſe may be in love, like a madman, but "ought never, nor can be ſo like a fool."

In fine when you draw a compariſon between your reſpect, your eſteem and the free, nay rather too familiar manners of the Chevalier——— when you frame a concluſion that you ought to have the preference upon this account; you are not aware, with how little juſtneſs you reaſon, in this particular. The Chevalier is merely galant. ———All he ſays is of no manner of conſequence, and paſſes but as words of courſe. Vanity alone, and a habit of paying compliments to every woman he meets, make up the whole of his character. Love goes for nothing, or but a very trifle in all his attachments. Like the butterfly, he reſts upon each flower but for an inſtant. A ſlight amuſement is all his object. So light a character is not capable of alarming a woman. The Counteſs perceives with pleaſure, how little danger there can be in receiving the addreſſes of ſuch a galant as this: ſhe knows perfectly well, how to rate the regards of the Chevalier: and to ſay all in a word, ſhe conſiders him as a perſon whoſe heart is intirely exhauſted. There is no woman, let her metaphyſical notions be ever ſo pure, but knows very well how to make a difference be-

tween a lover of this ſort, and ſuch a one as you are.

Therefore you will appear more formidable, and will be really more to be feared, from the manner in which you conduct yourſelf. You boaſt your reſpect and eſteem——But I anſwer, you have neither one or the other; and the Counteſs is very ſenſible of this herſelf.(b) Nothing has a purpoſe leſs reſpectful than ſuch a paſſion as yours. Very different from the Chevalier, you exact acknowledgments, preferences, returns, nay ſacrifices—all which the Counteſs perceives at one view. Or at leaſt, if under the cloud that envelopes you at preſent, ſhe cannot diſtinguiſh theſe pretenſions ſo clearly, nature has given her certain præſentiments of what it may coſt her, ſhould ſhe indulge you in the leaſt opportunity of inſtructing her in a paſſion, which perhaps ſhe partakes with you already.

Women ſeldom examine cloſely, the reaſons which determine them either to reſiſt or yield. They do not trouble themſelves with inveſtigating or defining them. But they have a ſort of ſenſibility about the matter, and their ſentiment is juſt. It ſerves them in the place of knowledge and reflection, it is a kind of inſtinct, which directs them often upon difficult occaſions, and conducts them perhaps, as ſafely as the moſt inlightened reaſon could do.(c)

Your

(b) Men ſometimes miſtake timidity for reſpect, and paſſion for eſteem. A little experience undeceives them, and the error is not of much conſequence. But 'tis too probable that many women have been undone by not being aware of this diſtinction.

(c) When philoſophers find their inveſtigation at a ſtand

Your charming Adelaide (d) would then play the *incognito* upon you, as long as ſhe could. This ſcheme is very conformable to her real intereſts; and yet, I am perſuaded that it is not the reſult of any reflection; nor does ſhe perceive, on the other hand, that a paſſion outwardly reſtrained, makes but the ſtronger impreſſion and greater progreſs within. Supply it then with fuel, and give that fire, ſhe endeavours to ſmother, time to inflame the heart in which ſhe ſtrives to conceal it.(e)

Upon the whole, Marquis, you muſt be of opinion with me that you have been miſtaken in two material points relative to this buſineſs. You imagined that you had more reſpect for the Counteſs than the Chevalier had. But you will find that his addreſſes have no material deſign, while yours aim directly at her heart. Again, you apprehend that the abſent, indifferent and inat-

ſtand, they ſcreen their ignorance by attributing the unaccountable effect to ſome *occult quality*. Here Ninon ſtiles the principle that guides us *ſenſibility*, *inſtinct*, a *je ne ſcai quoi*, ſeeming at a loſs to define it. I am afraid the unhappy woman lived and died in this ignorance. This *ſenſibility*, this *inſtinct* then, is modeſty; which like a guardian angel, directs and governs us, without the help of reaſon or mofal, and ſafer too—Thoſe require reflection——this prevents even thought.

(d) This alludes to a character in an Italian novel.

(e) The French words are, Laiſſez lui done, jetter de profondes *ruines* & donnez a ce *feu*, &c. Here is a confuſion of metaphor. This paſſion is firſt, compared to a tree; and then, to fire. I have taken the liberty of preſerving an uniformity of ſimile, by ſticking to the latter alluſion, throughout the ſentence.

tentive air with which ſhe received your devoirs, were proofs or preſages of your misfortune Undeceive yourſelf, for there cannot be a more certain ſign of a paſſion, than the efforts one makes ſo diſguiſe it. In a word whenever the Counteſs begins to treat you with the leaſt indulgence, while you continue to give tokens of your attachmen to her—when ſhe perceives you without reſentment, ready to make an explicit declaration of your fond ſentiments towards her—I promiſe you her heart then is yours, and you may rejoice in a reciprocal paſſion.

Stay a few words more. I had forgot to take notice of one particular in your letter, which related to myſelf. Yes Marquis, I have conſtantly purſued the method I had at firſt preſcribed to myſelf, in the beginning of this correſpondence. There are few ſubjects in my letters, that I have not made topics of converſation in my little ſociety. I very ſeldom propoſe any opinions of conſequence to you, 'till after I have collected ſuffrages upon the juſtneſs of them. Sometimes I conſult la Bruyere; ſometimes St. Evremond: at other times, the Abbé Chateauneauf, &c. You ought to admire my ingenuouſneſs—Few people are ready to acknowledge the helps they borrow in writing—but I confeſs freely, that you are chiefly indebted to the company I generally converſe with.

A propos—ſince we are ſpeaking of men of diſtinguiſhed merit, Monſieur de la Rochefaucault has juſt ſent a deſire, I would name a day to go ſee him. I have fixed on to-morrow, and I expect you will meet me there. You know well the affection he has for you.

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

I HAVE made ſome new reflections, Marquis, upon the ſituation you are in, and the embarraſſment you ſeem to labour under at preſent. But after all, prithee what neceſſity for making a declaration of love in form? Is it, becauſe you have read in romances that they proceed as methodically in galantry, as in a court of juſtice? This is too formal a proceſs, believe me. Suffer, as I ſaid before the flame to light up itſelf, and acquire new force; and you will find without having in terms expreſſed your paſſion, you will be advanced farther than if you had made one of thoſe expreſs declarations at which our grand-dames ſay, women ſhould be ſo much alarmed.

A confeſſion, abſolutely unneceſſary in itſelf, and which generally caſts a cloud over an amour for ſome time—it ſuſpends its progreſs.—Take my word for it, Marquis, a woman perſuades herſelf ſhe is beloved, much better by what ſhe herſelf obſerves, than by any thing that the lover can ſay to her.

Behave yourſelf as if you had already made the declaration you are in ſo much pain about: attend to the Chevalier, imitate his careleſs manner. Her behaviour toward him methinks, ſeems to preſcribe a rule of conduct to you. With your overſtrained reſpect, and circumſpect air, you appear a perſon who has ſome deep deſign in contemplation: one who is going to attempt ſome deſperate ſtroke. Your whole deportment muſt neceſſarily alarm a woman who knows the conſequences of ſuch a paſſion as yours. Be aſ-

ſured, that while you ſuffer her to perceive your preparations for an attack, you will always find her *under arms.*

Have you ever known an experienced general, when he hadformed the deſign of ſurpriſing a town, make known to his enemy by his motions, upon which ſide he meant the aſſult? In love, as in war, is the conqueror ever called to account whether he owes his ſucceſs to force or addreſs? He has vanquiſhed—he receives the laurel——his hopes are accompliſhed——he is happy. Follow his example, and you may obtain the ſame fortune. Conceal your march, diſguiſe your deſigns, 'till oppoſition is vain: 'till battle is joined, and victory ſecured, before you have denounced war. In a word imitate thoſe heroes whoſe enterpriſes are only known by the happy event that attends them.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

AT length, Marquis, ſhe has heard you, without reſentment, declare your paſſion to her, and vow by all that lovers hold moſt ſacred, that you will worſhip her eternally. Will you believe my prophecy another time? However, ſhe would treat you with leſs reſerve, ſhe pretends, if you would be a reaſonable perſon, and limit your ſentiments within the bounds of ſimple friendſhip: the very name of lover, ſhocks the Counteſs. Prithee do not differ with her about titles, provided in the main, that the matter is the ſame: and follow the advice that Monſieur de la Sabliere gives you in the following ſtanza:

Belinda will not yield to love,
But wiſhes for a friend ſincere,
Whoſe tender conduct ſtill ſhould prove
His fond regard and anxious care:
And alſo ſhould eſteem her fair.

Lovers with caution urge your claim,
She only hates of Love—*The Name.*

But ſhe diſtracts you with injurious ſuſpicions about your ſincerity and conſtancy: ſhe refuſes to believe you, becauſe moſt men are falſe and perjured: ſhe refrains from loving you, becauſe they are generally inconſtant. How happy are you, and how little does the Counteſs know her own heart, if ſhe thinks that this is the way to ſhew you her indifference! Shall I give you the import of her converſation with you? She is

touched with the paſſion you expreſs toward her; but the complaints and misfortunes of her friends have made her apprehend that the proteſtations of lovers are generally falſe.

I think, however, that there is ſome injuſtice in this cenſure: for I, who am not apt to flatter ye, am really perſuaded that they are almoſt all ſincere, upon theſe occaſions. They become enamoured of a miſtreſs, that is, they feel a ſtrong deſire to poſſeſs her charms. The fond idea which their imaginations form of this enjoyment, deceives them ito a warm opinion, that the pleaſures they have attached to it, will only end with life. They never once dream that the fire which inflames their hearts, ſhall ſooner or later abate its fervour; languiſh, and become finally extinct.

This, though ſo certain an event, appears to them, at that time, beyond all poſſibility: therefore, they really ſwear eternal conſtancy to us, with all the ingenuouſneſs imaginable; and to ſuſpect them, would be a mortal injury to their veracity. But—*the poor ignorants* promiſe more than they are capable of performing—not being aware that their hearts are formed of a ſubſtance ſolid enough to retain always the ſame impreſſion.

They ceaſe to love, without knowing why——they even feel a kind of ſcruple, when they firſt begin to cool—they go on proteſting yet, after their paſſion is extinct—they ſtill *hold the courſe*, 'till after having jaded themſelves in vain, they ſubmit to indifference or diſguſt, and become inconſtant with the ſame ſincerity, as when they made eternal vows to the contrary. (f)

Nothing

(f) Whatever woman can ever pretend to be deceived, after the *too true* philoſophy ſet forth in this letter?

Nothing is more natural than all this. The emotion that a growing paſſion had excited in their breaſts, conjured up the ſpell that deceived them. The charm is diſſolved—the paſſion has ſubſided. What crime can be imputed to the lover upon this account? He actually imagined he could for ever preſerve his conſtancy, at the time of his proteſtation.—And, perhaps, women may as frequently rejoice at this infidelity, becauſe it eaſes them of a reſtraint over the fickleneſs of their own diſpoſitions.

But to return.——The Courteſs charges you with the inconſtancy of your ſex; ſhe fears you may become faithleſs, like the generality of lovers: ready to yield upon plauſible aſſurances, ſhe even ſolicits you for arguments to ſtrengthen her opinion of your ſincerity. The paſſion, then, you profeſs toward her, does not in the leaſt offend her. Offend her! it tranſports her. It flatters her ſo charmingly, that her ſole uneaſineſs is, leſt it ſhould not be ſincere. Diſſipate her fears; make her believe the happineſs you proffer, and which ſhe already knows how to prize, is not ideal, but a real bliſs. Proceed farther, and try to perſuade her that it will not end 'till life itſelf ſhall ceaſe. Her reſiſtance grows faint, her doubts reſolved, and with what willing aſſent does ſhe yield to the ſlighteſt arguments tending to remove her ſuſpicions and diſquiets!

Women are much miſtaken, if by their doubts with regard to the ſincerity and conſtancy of men, they mean to declare their indifference or avoidance of the pleaſures of love. When they expreſs their fears leſt the happineis itſelf may fall ſhort of expectation, or that your inconſtancy may render it ſo, do they not already betray a fond preſenti-

ment, and may not all their alarms be reduced to one only, that of being too ſoon deprived of their imagined *Elyſium?* Heſitating between this fear, and a ſtrong paſſion for pleaſure, they become apprehenſive, even from the imperfect view they have then of it, that they may perhaps be too ſenſibly affected at its loſs.

In fine, Marquis, you may ſuppoſe that every woman, who ſpeaks to you in the ſtile of the Counteſs, addreſſes you after this manner: "I "have a very h gh notion of the pleaſures of "love: the idea I have framed of them, is the "moſt bewitching thing in the world: you may "reſt aſſured then, that I am as little indifferent "to the enjoyment of them, as you yourſelf can "be. But——the more my mind is tranſported "with this idea, the greater my dread is, leſt it "ſhould all prove a fond *chimera*; and I only "decline this happineſs, from an apprehenſion "of ſeeing it terminate too ſoon. Could I have "any tolerable ſecurity that it would be perma-"nent, how feeble would my reſiſtance be! "But will you not abuſe my credulity? May I "not be one day puniſhed for my too great con-"fidence in you? Alas, how ſoon may that day "arrive! O! if I could hope to enjoy, even for "any reaſonable time, the ſocial pleaſures of a "mutual paſſion, all farther diſpute upon this "ſubject, ſhould be immediately at an end."

LETTER

LETTER XX.

THE rival they have given you, appears to me vaſtly formidable, from his being juſt ſuch a perſon as I adviſed you to be. I know the Chevalier. There is no one more capable of that addreſs which draws in the unexperienced. I'll hold a wager that his heart has not yet received the leaſt ſcar. He attacks the Counteſs in cold blood. You are a loſt man. A lover, as much enamoured as you appear to be, commits a thouſand overſights: the beſt concerted ſchemes miſcarry in his hands: every moment he gives advantage againſt himſelf: ſuch is his misfortune, that precipitation and timidity ruin him by turns: he loſes a thouſand of thoſe little opportunities which always gain ſome ground.

On the contrary—A man who makes love for amuſement only, profits himſelf of the ſlighteſt occaſions: nothing eſcapes him: he obſerves the progreſs he makes: he watches all unguarded moments, and turns them to his own account: every thing conſpires to aid his wiſhes: his very indiſcretions are often the effect of deliberation, and advance his ſucceſs: till at length, he acquires ſuch a ſuperiority, that he may almoſt name the day of his triumph.

Beware, Marquis, of preſſing on too faſt: do not betray paſſion enough to make the Counteſs depend too much on the exceſs of your fondneſs: let her feel ſome inquietude in her turn: oblige her to take ſome pains on her part, to ſecure her conqueſt, from the alarm you ſhall purpoſely give her of loſing it. Women never treat ye ſo cavaliery

liery as when they think ye too far engaged to quit them. Their virtue, leſs than their pride, renders them intractable. Like merchants, before whom you ſhew too great a liking to their goods, the riſe upon you with as little conſcience.

Moderate then your imprudent earneſtneſs.—Shew leſs of love and you will excite the more. We never ſet ſo high a value upon any good, as in the moment we fear to loſe it. A little policy in love is abſolutely neceſſary to the happineſs of both. I might proceed farther, and adviſe you even to employ a little artifice. Upon all other occaſions, 'tis certainly better, rather to be the dupe, than the knave. But in galantry, fools only are the dupes, and the knaves have always the laughers on their ſide.

I was going to take my leave, but cannot find in my heart to quit you, without affording you one word of conſolation. I would not diſcourage you.——However formidable the Chevalier appears to be, you ought not to deſpair. I ſuſpect that the fineſſing Counteſs has brought him into play merely to raiſe your jealouſy. I do not mean to compliment you, but have the pleaſure to aſſure you, that you have infinitely more merit than he. You are young, juſt entering into life, and have not yet loved.—The Chevalier *has lived*. —Where is the woman inſenſible to this difference?

Adieu.

END OF VOL. I.

THE

MEMOIRS

OF

NINON DE L'ENCLOS:

With her LETTERS to

MONS. De ST. EVREMOND,

AND TO THE

Marquis de Sevigné.

Collected and Tranſlated from the FRENCH,

BY MRS. GRIFFITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Donec erunt ignes, arcuſque cupidinis arma,
Diſcentur numeri, culte Tibulle, tui.

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M,DCC,LXXVIII.

THE LETTERS OF Mademoiſelle Ninon de l'Enclos TO THE Marquis de Sevigné

LETTER XXI.

YOU would uſe integrity in love, Marquis! You are far gone truly. I ſhall not ſhew your letter. You would be made a jeſt of. You cannot, you ſay, employ the artifice I adviſed you to. Your candor and refined ſentiments might have raiſed your character in ancient days. Love was then conſidered as an affair of honour and punctilio. But at preſent, ſince the corruption of times

times has quite changed our notions, it is treated merely as a ſport of vanity or caprice. Your inexperience has left a ſtiffneſs in your moral that will certainly demoliſh you, if your good ſenſe does not ſupple you to the manners of the age.

One muſt not, now-a-days, keep a window in our breaſts. All is grimace: we muſt take up with complaiſance, profeſſions, and outward ſhew: 'tis an univerſal comedy, and the world are much in the right to perform it. Society would ſoon be at an end, were we mutually to declare our true ſentiments of each other, the bad along with the good. The neceſſary intercourſe of mankind obliged them to lay aſide this uncouth ſincerity, and to aſſume a certain poliſhed phraſe, and flattering addreſs in the place of it.

This habit, by degrees, is obtained in galantry; and notwithſtanding your nice ſcruples, you muſt agree that when the manners of politeneſs are not employed to ridicule or deceive, they are to be reckoned among the ſocial virtues—and the commerce in which it is moſt neceſſary to diſguiſe our ſentiments, is galantry. Upon many occaſions, a lover gains as much by concealing the greatneſs of his paſſion, as he does upon others by feigning it.

I know the Counteſs, her character.—She has more addreſs than you. I dare ſay, that ſhe diſſembles her affections for you, with as much pains as you take to multiply the proofs of yours. I muſt repeat it again—Be leſs aſſiduous, and you will be better received. Make her jealous in her turn. Give her fears of loſing you. I'll warrant then you'll ſoon find her more complying. 'Tis at leaſt the ſureſt way of knowing the rank you hold in her affections.

Adieu.

LETTER XXII.

A TEN days ſilence, Marquis! I really began to be uneaſy. The application of my adivce, then has been ſucceſsful. I wiſh you joy of it. But I am angry with you for being chagrined becauſe ſhe would not make you a confeſſion in form. The *I love you*, it ſeems is a precious expreſſion with you. During this fortnight you have been endeavouring to penetrate the ſentiments of the Counteſs, and have at length attained them. You have diſcovered her regards for you. What ſhould you deſire more? Would a ſimple confeſſion give you a further power over her heart? There is ſomething impolitic in this conduct: for do you know that nothing is more apt to diſguſt a woman of any nicety, than the inſiſting upon that very expreſſion ſhe has refuſed you? You are much miſtaken.—To a lover of true delicacy this refuſal would be infinitely preferable to an explicit declaration.

Would you underſtand your true intereſt? Inſtead of preſſing your miſtreſs upon this point, you ſhould endeavour rather, as I told you before, to hide from herſelf the progreſs of her attachment toward you. Contrive to win her affections, before ſhe perceives your deſign; and conceal it as much as poſſible, even from her own obſervation.

Can one imagine a ſituation more charming, than to perceive a heart intereſted on ones behalf, without the leaſt conſciouſneſs in itſelf; growing warm by degrees, and melting away to the moſt perfect tenderneſs? What tranſport, to rejoice in ſecret

ſecret over all its emotions, to guide, to augment, to precipitate them, and to congratulate one's ſelf on the victory, before the yielding fair has ſurmiſed even a ſuſpiſion of the ſiege! Theſe are what I ſtile pleaſures indeed!

Attend to me, Marquis; behave yourſelf toward the Counteſs, as if the confeſſion had already eſcaped her. Perhaps you may never be able to prevail on her to pronounce the words, *I love you*; but 'tis becauſe ſhe really loves you, that ſhe will not ſay ſo; while at the ſame time ſhe is doing every thing neceſſary to convince you of it. Women labour under great difficulties: they are at leaſt as willing as you, to acknowledge the paſſion you have inſpired them with. But what would you have them do, Marquis? Men, moſt ingenious to forge ſhackles for themſelves, have affixed a certain ſhame to the confeſſion of our paſſion; and whatever notions ye may have framed of our manners of thinking, believe me that this ſame declaration is always a mortifying circumſtance to us. Thoſe who have the leaſt knowledge of the world, muſt be very ſenſible of the conſequences. The *I love you*, in itſelf, is certainly a very innocent expreſſion; but the effects attending it, muſt neceſſarily alarm us. It reſts upon you then, to conceal them from us, and to ſhut your eyes upon the precipices you are leading us toward.

Beſides, Marquis, attend to this nice point. Your obſtinacy in perſiſting in this confeſſion, is leſs the effect of love, than vanity; and you will find it a difficult matter to deceive us about the real motives of your inſtances. Nature has endowed us with an admirable inſtinct; and has

taught

taught us to diſtinguiſh with great preciſion, between what ariſes from the paſſion itſelf, and what is heterogeneous from it.

Ever indulgent to the effects produced by the love we have ourſelves inſpired, we freely pardon ye the indiſcretions, the extravagancies—the whole catalogue of follies you lovers are liable to But, you will always find us intractible, whenever your pride attempts to combat ours. It is hardly to be credited, but you often diſguſt us by things which are by no means neceſſary to your own happineſs. Your vanity graſps at *ſhadows*, while *ſubſtances* eſcape you.

If you would govern yourſelf by my judgment, turn aſide from this vain purſuit, begin to enjoy a ſurer earneſt of your triumph, taſte the dear pleaſure of hiding this ſecret from her own heart, and ſuffer her for a while, to rejoice in her *inſolvent* ſecurity. Suppoſe that your importunities ſhould at length wreſt this ſo envied phraſe from her lips; what more certain advantage would you gain by it? Your doubts, would they then ceaſe? Could you reſt ſatisfied whether you owned this expreſſion to complaiſance, or to love?

I know women perfectly well. They may deceive by premeditated action, or deliberate ſpeech but the involuntary tokens of a paſſion, they are ſtriving to conceal, bear ſure and certain teſtimony. In fine, the confeſſions truly flattering, are never thoſe we make, but thoſe that eſcape us.

LET-

LETTER XXIII.

WILL you pardon me, Marquis? I laugh at your afflictions! You take things extremely to the heart! Some indiſcretions of yours have raiſed the reſentment of the Counteſs, and your inquietude is inexpreſſible. You kiſſed her hand with an emphaſis that was taken notice of by the company; ſhe ſhewed ſeveral marks of her diſpleaſure; and the conſtant preferences you obſerve toward her, ever mortifying to other women, have expoſed you to the piqued railleries of the Marchioneſs, her ſiſter in-law.

'Theſe are, in ſad truth, moſt unfortunate events! But are you really ſo ſimple as to betake yourſelf to deſpair, upon the outward appearance of ſuch a quarrel, without conceiving the leaſt hope of an inward forgiveneſs? 'Tis left for me, then, to re-aſſure your courage; and, in order to this, I ſhall be forced to reveal ſome more of our female myſteries to you. I cannot, upon every occaſion, make apologies for our ſex. —I owe you frankneſs. I have promiſed it—and I acquit myſelf.

Women are generally actuated by two incompatible paſſions—the deſire of pleaſing, and the fear of infamy. Judge you of our embarraſment! On one hand we are ardent to have witneſſes of the effects of our charms. For ever occupied toward the making ourſelves taken notice of, and tranſported with every opportunity of humbling other women, we would render them ſpectators of every homage paid us, and of all the preferences we obtain. Would you know wherein the pleaſure

ſure lies here? In mortifying the pride of our rivals merely. Thoſe indiſcretions which betray the ſentiments we have inſpired, delight us in proportion to their deſpair. In fine, ſuch imprudencies convince us better of your paſſion, than the timidity and caution which are incapable of celebrating our charms.

But, on the other hand, what bitterneſs allays our ſweeteſt pleaſures! Blended with theſe advantages are the malice of our rivals, and perhaps the contempt of our lovers. Beſides another hard caſe is, that the world knows no difference between thoſe who receive your addreſſes, and and thoſe who reward them. Alone, or in ſober thought, every rational woman would prefer the character of chaſtity, to the fame of beauty. But, place the beſt of us in competition with a rival, capable of diſputing with her the prize——— were ſhe to riſk that reputation ſhe was the moment before ſo jealous of———was the lover to endanger it to the laſt degree—no conſideration is of equal weight with the triumphant pleaſure of ſeeing herſelf preferred.

You willl receive your preferences in turn; ſhe will imagine at firſt, that ſhe pays them to gratitude alone; but you will find them earneſts of her affection.———Avoiding to appear ungrateful, we exceed to fondneſs. (a) Your indiſcretions

(a) There is the ſame ſentiments in the Orphan.

" Great ſpirits bear miſsfortunes hardly;
" Good offices claim gratitude and pride,
" Where power is wanting, will uſurp a little,
" And make us rather than be thought behind hand,
" Pay over price." ——— ———

tions then, never offend us. When we ſeem to reſent, 'tis becauſe we ſhould ſave appearances, and that you would be yourſelves the firſt to cenſure a too remiſs indulgence.

But, take care how you miſtake this point.—Not to treſpaſs, upon ſuch occaſions, would be a certain way to offend us. We recommend prudence and diſcretion to ye. Is not this the part given us to play? Is it neceſſary that we ſhould teach you yours? Oft' have I heard it ſaid, that to take the *Letter*, was to miſtake the *Spirit* of a law. You will anſwer our intentions, when you know how to conſtrue them.

LETTER XXIV.

THE Counteſs, it ſeems, is at preſent on the defenſive. You think ſhe has now no other deſign but to prove your attachments. Whatever preferences you mark towards her, however indiſcreetly you teſtify your paſſion, ſhe receives them all without reſentment:—the leaſt apology ſilences her reproofs, and her piques have ſomething ſo engaging in them, that you even lay traps to provoke them.

I rejoice heartily with you in the pleaſure that ſuch a ſucceſs muſt afford you, but, however theſe proceedings may flatter you, if you have any eſteem for her, you ſhould endeavour to put an end to them. Women, who have any ſenſe, or the leaſt attention to their reputations, but little underſtand their true intereſts, in multiplying thus,

by

by an affected incredulity, the occasions of censure. Must they not know it is not their most frail moments that most affect their characters? The doubts they pretend about the passion they have inspired, do them often more injury, even than their defeat itself.

While they remain incredulous, a thousand imprudences expose them. They break bulk, and vend their reputations by retail. While a lover finds them still dubious of his attachments, he throws aside all reserve, whenever he meets with any opportunity of shewing the sincerity of his professions. The most indiscreet earnestness, the most distinguished preferences, and the most unregarded solicitude, appear to him the surest method of conviction. And can he make ostentation of all these cares and assiduities, without having them taken notice of by the world—without piquing the pride of other women—without provoking their most censorious reflections?

As soon as preliminaries are settled, that is, as soon as we begin to believe ourselves really beloved, nothing appears outwardly, nothing transpires. —And, if our engagements happen to be suspected, if our disguise is discovered, it must be from the recollection of what had passed before our affections were determined. I wish then, for the sake of both parties, that whenever a woman perceives herself indifferent to a lover, instead of suffering him to be amused by vain hopes, she would immediately give him his *audience of leave*. But, at the same time, I would advise, that the moment she is persuaded she is truly beloved by a man she likes, she will acknowledge this conviction.—*Saving and reserving to herself*, however, the *dear right* of obliging him to hope, fear, pray, and

beseech

beſeech, as long as ſhe thinks fit, before ſhe confeſſes her reciprocal affection. For one cannot ſeem to doubt, without laying the lover under a neceſſity of proving his ſincerity; and he cannot demonſtrate it with ſucceſs, without making the public his confidents, by the too great earneſtneſs of his devoirs.

This advice would have been by no means neceſſary in former times, when the want of addreſs in men ſuffered women to remain intractable. But now-a-days, that the reſolution of the aſſailants leave us ſo little power of defence——at preſent, when it is affirmed, that ſince the invention of powder, no citadel is impregnable—why ſhould we expoſe ourſelves to the tedioufneſs of a ſiege in form, when it is certain, that after a great deal of loſs and trouble, we muſt capitulate at laſt?

Then teach your charming Counteſs this prudent leſſon.—Shew her the inconveniences of any further diffidence; you will convince her of your paſſion.—You will force her to believe you, by the management ſhe ſhould have of her reputation, which will ſupply her with one reaſon more, for according you a credit, which ſhe has perhaps, been for ſome time in pain to refuſe you.

Farewel.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

MY laſt letter, then, has provoked you, Marquis, and you inſiſt upon it, that 'tis not impoſſible to meet with virtuous women, even in theſe our Days. And well! did I ever deny it? In comparing women to places beſieged, did I ſay that there were no towns which had never been taken? Nay, how could I ſay ſo, when there are many that were never inveſted? You ſee, then, how perfectly I agree with you. But to prevent any farther miſtakes between us, on this point, let me explain myſelf a little.—Here follows my ſyſtem of faith, upon this article.

I ſtedfaſtly believe in women of virtue, who have never been aſſaulted, or where the ſiege has been ill carried on. I believe alſo, in women of virtue, though aſſaulted and well inveſted—when they happen to have neither a turn for galantry, nor ſtrong paſſions, nor opportunity, nor a diſagreeable huſband.

I have a mind to repeat to you, on this occaſion, a ſenſible converſation I had once, upon this ſubject, when I was very young, with a certain prude, whom an unlucky adventure happened to betray to public cenſure. I had but little experience at that time, and judged always of others with that ſeverity one is apt to preſerve, 'till our own perſonal weakneſſes have inſpired us with ſomewhat more of indulgence toward the failings of our neighbours. I had made very free with this lady's character, and ſhe had heard it. I met her accidentally one day, at the houſe of a friend. She took me aſide, and held the following diſcourſe

with me, which made ſuch an impreſſion on my memory, that the very words have not been yet effaced.

" It is not with deſign to reproach you, ſaid " ſhe, with the liberty of ſpeech you have taken, " relative to my misfortune, that I have ſought " this opportunity of entertaining you alone. It " is to inform you of ſome ſentiments upon this " topic; which, if you do not die very young, you " may, perhaps, one day experience the full " force of.

" You have cenſured my conduct freely, and " ſeem to regard me with that diſdain, which " argues how much you are elated, on account " of your having never yet given the world any " manner of advantage againſt you. You ima- " gine that you have virtue, and preſume this " principle will ever abide with you. Theſe are, " my dear child, but the illuſions of your ſelf-ſuffi- " cience. I am called upon to inſtruct your inex- " perience, and to make you ſuſpect, that ſo far " from being able to depend upon this ſame vir- " tue, which renders you ſo inexorable to others, " you cannot be certain even whether you have " any of it at all. This aſſertion may, perhaps, " ſurprize you; but lend me your whole atten- " tion, and you may probably be ſoon convin- " ced of the truth of my affirmation.

" Men have not yet paid their addreſſes to you: " your mirrour, alone, has given you an idea of " your charms. Your heart——I judge from " the careleſſneſs of your whole deportment—— " has not yet entered you into its ſecret councils. " The impulſes of nature have not hitherto—— " *Here ſhe was miſtaken*—explained themſelves " to you. While you remain in ſuch an indo-

" lent

" lent ſituation, or while your guardians *keep you*
" *in view*, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, I will my
" ſelf be reſponſible for you.

" But—after your heart has diſcourſed you a
" little—when thoſe eyes, that wound already,
" ſhall have received the addition of ſentimental
" life and expreſſion—when thoſe *windows to the*
" *breaſt* ſhall have betrayed love by intuition—
" when interior movements ſhall have rouſed you
" from ſupineneſs——in fine, when inclinations,
" almoſt ſmothered by the ſcruples of ſtrict edu-
" cation, may have occaſioned you to bluſh ſome-
" times in ſecret—then, my dear prude, your
" own ſenſibility, and the ſtruggles you will
" exert to overcome it, may by degrees, dimi-
" niſh your ſeverity toward others, and ſuffer
" their failings to plead ſome defence before your
" too rigid tribunal—The judge will mitigate
" the verdict.——The experience of your own
" weakneſs will caution you from deeming your
" virtue infallible. Nay, your ſurprize may be
" ſtill carried farther, and the little aid you may
" be able to deduce from thence, will naturally
" raiſe ſome ſuſpicion, that in reality, you never
" were poſſeſſed of ſuch a principle at all.

" Can one be aſſured that a man is brave, who
" has never been eſſayed? Women are in the
" ſame predicament. Experience alone equally
" approves chaſtity, and aſcertains valour. 'Till
" we have tried an enemy, we are ignorant how
" far he is redoubtable, and what degree of
" proweſs it may be requiſite to oppoſe to him.
" (b) In like manner, before a woman has the

" right

(b) Fighting is bravery, but declining it is prudence: and there is this happy difference between the ſexes,

" right to compliment herſelf on account of vir-
" tue or chaſtity, as eſſentially within her own
" powers, ſhe ſhould be certain that no danger,
" however great, no motive though ever ſo preſ-
" ſing, nor any pretence, how plauſible ſoever,
" can have force enough to overcome her reſolu-
" tion. It is requiſite that the moſt favourable
" opportunity, the fondeſt paſſion, the ſureſt re-
" liance on ſecrecy, the moſt perfect eſteem and
" confidence in the lover; in a word, that all
" theſe allurements, combined together, ſhall
" not be ſufficient to warp her integrity.

" In reality, to be aſſured that her virtues is
" to be accepted, in the proper ſignification of
" the expreſſion, ſhe muſt be one who has vindi-
" cated her chaſtity from all theſe united dan-
" gers: for it would be but a ſlight merit to have
" reſiſted love, without conſtitution—opportuni-
" ty, without paſſion—or deſires, without occa-
" ſion. Her chaſtity muſt ſtill remain problema-
" tical, before ſhe has been encountered by all
" the forces that are capable of being brought
" down againſt her. For it may well be urged,
" that with a different kind of complexion, ſhe
" might not have reſiſted love: or, that un un-
" lucky occaſion might have given advantage
againſt her."

" At this rate then, I replied, there may not
" be ſuch a perſon in the world, as a virtuous
" woman: for, 'tis very probable that we may
" not be able to produce a ſingle inſtance, where
" ſuch a train of artillery has been played off
" againſt

ſexes, with regard to this point, that men may ſometimes injure their character, but women univerſally inſure theirs, by avoiding the conflict. *The Parthian exerciſe is our beſt diſciſſine.*

" againſt any one fortreſs." " 'Tis more than
" probable, ſays ſhe; but would you know the
" reaſon? Becauſe ſuch a combined force is rarely
" requiſite to conquer our reſiſtance. Sometimes,
" one of theſe enemies alone, may be ſufficient
" to do our buſineſs."

I ſtill debated—" You ſeem to think then, ſaid
" I, that our virtue is by no means in our own
" power, ſince you make it to depend upon ſo
" many circumſtances, foreign to our own elec-
" tion."

" Certainly—prithee anſwer me Is it within
" the power of your own election to give your-
" ſelf a warm or a cold complexion? Can you
" aſſume reſolution ſufficient to combat the im-
" petuoſity of paſſion? Can you arrange all the
" circumſtances of your life ſo happily, as never
" to find yourſelf alone, with a lover you ap-
" prove, who knows his advantages, and how
" to profit of them? In ſhort, is it in your power
" to prevent his addreſſes, though innocent at
" firſt, from marking on your affections, thoſe
" impreſſions, which it is natural for them to
" ſtrike? Thoſe things are certainly, neither
" within our option, or our power—And to af-
" firm the contrary, would be as unphiloſophic,
" as to ſay that ſteel may reſiſt the loadſtone.

" And, yet you pretend that your virtue is
" within your own province! How vain to attri-
" bute to ones ſelf a principle to-day, which we
" may be in danger of forfeiting to-morrow!
" The chaſtity of women, like every other ad-
" vantage, boaſted or poſſeſſed by mortals, is a
" peculiar grace from heaven.—It is a *boon*, and
" therefore may be refuſed us.

" Conſider then how partially you vaunt your-
" ſelf, from the meer preſumptions of your ſelf-

" ſufficience; and acknowledge your injuſtice, in
" ſo uncharitably cenſuring thoſe, who may
" have received from nature an irreſiſtible prone-
" neſs to love, whom a violent paſſion might
" have overpowered, or who may have been
" ſurprized at ſome of thoſe unlucky moments, in
" which, you might not have extricated yourſelf,
" with better ſucceſs.

" If you'll attend, I ſhall ſupply you with a
" farther proof of the juſtneſs of my reaſoning.
" Are you not ſecretly of opinion, that every wo-
" man who would preſerve her integrity, ſhould
" aſſiduouſly parry every kind of advantage that
" may poſſibly be taken againſt her? That ſhe
" ought to pay attention even to trifles, the moſt
" minute in themſelves, becauſe they may lead
" perchance, to things of more importance?
" 'Tis much a ſafer refuge, to diſcourage the
" purſuit by a proper reſerve, then to depend
" upon our defence, upon the attack.

" May not the proof of my propoſition be
" evinced from this one argument alſo, that the
" experience of mothers induces them to lay
" every kind of reſtraint upon their daughters,
" that prudence can deviſe? They proceed
" further.—A cautious matron depends neither
" upon the principles of her ward, nor on the fear
" of infamy, nor upon the unfavourable opinions
" ſhe has inſtilled with regard to the morals of
" men; ſhe keeps her conſtantly *in view*; ſhe
" oppoſes every difficulty ſhe can contrive, in
" the road of temptation.

" What is the reaſon of all theſe precautions?
" Is it not that theſe guardians tremble for our
" ſafety, ſhould they ſuffer us to be expoſed for
" one moment to danger? And yet, notwith-

" ſtanding

" ſtanding all this *cloiſter* diſcipline, how fre-
" quently does it happen, that love has the pow-
" er of triumphing over every bulwark!

" A young woman, well educated, or to ex-
" preſs myſelf, juſter, well attended to, con-
" ceives a certain pride in her virtue, becauſe
" ſhe is apt to impute it to her peculiar merit:
" but in truth, it is only a ſlave, which though
" cloſely chained, would challenge praiſe for not
" running away.

" Prithee, look round, and obſerve among
" what claſſes of life, you generally find the *for-*
" *lorn hope*. Is it not in thoſe, where they are
" neither rich or happy enough to be conſtantly
" ſurrounded with all thoſe *outworks* which may
" have probably guarded yourſelf? In thoſe,
" where men have attacked them with more aſ-
" ſurance, more eaſily, more frequently, and
" conſequently, with all manner of advantages?
" In thoſe, where the impreſſions of education,
" example, pride, or the proſpect of ſome happy
" eſtabliſhment, have not defended them? A rank
" or two lower, you might yourſelf have been
" born that very woman whom you now diſdain;
" and notwithſtanding thoſe adventitious ſuccours,
" which have ſupported the virtue you are now
" ſo vain of, it is poſſible that in a few days, y t
" may become more deſpicable than her, becauſe
" you have had ſome advantages above her.

" I do not, however, take away from the me-
" rit of your virtue, in order to leſſon your at-
" tachment to it: but, by giving you ſome idea
" of your own weakneſs, I mean only to draw
" from you a little indulgence toward thoſe un-
" happy ones, whom too impetuous a paſſion,

" or the fortuitouſneſs of other circumſtances,
" may have precipitated into a ſituation, ſo
" truly mortifying to their own reflections.
" My ſole intent is, to convince you, that
" you ſhould not exult ſo much upon an
" advantage, which you are not indebted to
" yourſelf for, and which the accidents of
" to-morrow may, perhaps, deprive you of."

She would have proceeded, but was interrupted by perſons who joined us. It was not long before my own experience convinced me, that I ought not to have conceived ſo high an opinion of many virtues, which had been impoſed upon me for ſuch before—beginning with my own.

LET

LETTER XXVI.

I Perfectly agree with you, Marquis—Though the ſentiments I communicated to you in my laſt letter, may appear true in ſpeculation, it may however be dangerous that all women ſhould be too much convinced of them. It is not through an opinion of our frailty, that we are likely to remain chaſte; but from an happy perſuaſion that we are free agents, and at perfect liberty to reſiſt or yield. Is it by telling a ſoldier that he ſhall be overcome, that you inſpirit his courage to the combat? But you might eaſily have perceived that the perſon who harrangued in my letter, had a perſonal intereſt in eſtabliſhing her philoſophy.

It is true, that to look narrowly into the general frailty of human nature, her arguments will appear ſpecious, at leaſt;—but it may be juſtly apprehended, that by allowing us to reaſon thus, upon the nature of virtue, we admit thoſe rules to be doubtful, which we ſhould implicitly accept; and practiſe as ordinances, the very examining into which is to be deemed a crime.

Beſides, to perſuade women that their virtue r not ſpecifical, would probably deſtroy their ſtrongeſt motives for preſerving it. Namely the fond opinion, that it is their own province they are defending. Diſcouragement would be the natural conſequence of ſuch an argument: ſo that it could poſſibly ſerve no other purpoſe, than to leſſen the ſilent upbraidings of a frail woman, under the guilt of a vicious conduct. But, let us pro-

ceed to matters which are of conſequence to yourſelf alone.

In fine, after a world of doubts, fears, and revolutions in your amour, you are at length convinced of your happineſs. You have wrought up the Counteſs to one of thoſe tender moments, when ſhe could no longer retain her ſecret, and ſhe has at length pronounced, without reſerve, that charming word, you have ſo long and paſſionately wiſhed to hear the ſound of. She has been carried farther.—Some involuntary teſtimonies have eſcaped her, which more ſufficiently aſcertain her affection toward you. Theſe, inſtead of weakening your paſſion, have added new fewel to the flame. You are, in a word, the happieſt mortal alive, if you knew the thorough ſatisfaction I receive from your preſent ſituation, it would probably give ſome little increaſe to it.

The firſt ſacrifice ſhe offered you, was to baniſh the Chevalier. But you declined it, and you judged right. This would have been to have expoſed the Counteſs, without gaining any thing, on your own part. And indeed, I have generally obſerved, that women oftener loſe themſelves by imprudencies, than by real faults. The confidence you have repoſed in her, by ſo generous a proceeding, muſt have a delicate effect upon her ſentiment.

Every thing, thus far, is as well as one could reaſonably hope for. But to ſpeak freely, the turn this adventure ſeems to take, begins to alarm me. We ſat out, if you remember, upon a maxim, that love was to be treated rather *cavalierly*: you were not to ſuffer that affection to obtain more than a ſlight and temporary ſway over

your

your heart, and not a formal and permanent empire. But I begin to obſerve that matters, by degrees, aſſume a ſerious face, and you actually ſeem late to conſider of this paſſion with a certain air of dignity that renders me uneaſy. The acknowledgment of true merit, real qualities, and an amiable character, ſeem to enter into the motives of your attachment; which joined to her more obvious beauties, have rendered you a *forlorn hope*, in turn. Eſteem is a dangerous ingredient, mixed up with galantry. It does not leave one ſufficiently at liberty; and reduces love to an *occupation*, rather than an *amuſement*. In fine, I become apprehenſive, that your adventure may ſoon take a turn, perhaps rather grave, than gay.

But poſſibly, the ſpirit of the Counteſs may raiſe up freſh commotions; and new difficulties may re-animate your attachment.—Too profound a peace ſuffers it to relax. Security weakens love. When formal ſyſtems once take poſſeſſion of the heart, paſſion ſubſides, indolence takes place, wearineſs ſucceeds, and diſguſt finally cloſes the ſcene.

LET

LETTER XXVII.

MAdame de Sevigné does not agree in my opinion, you ſay, with regard to the true cauſes of love. She pretends that there are many women who know nothing but the fair ſide of this paſſion, and that the ſenſes come not in for the leaſt ſhare in their attachment. She adds, that tho' what ſhe is pleaſed to ſtyle my *ſyſtem*, were true, it would be a very improper piece of philoſophy for a woman to utter, and might have a bad effect upon morals.

Theſe are ſerious rebukes indeed; but what foundation have they? None——that I can ſee. I am ſorry to find that Madam de Sevigné has not read my letters in the *ſpirit* they were written. *Syſtems!* ſhe does me too much honour truly. I never had ſtudious application enough for *ſyſtems*. Beſides I have always looked upon them as philoſophic dreams; and does ſhe receive all I have ſaid as the ſport of fancy only? We ſeem to be very far from a reckoning. I *imagine* nothing. I paint *real* objects. I would eſtabliſh a certain truth ——in order to which, I would not ſurpriſe the wit but challenge the underſtanding. She might perhaps be ſtruck with ſome of my propoſitions, though they appear to be ſo very ſelf-evident, that I did not ſtay to prove them. Nor indeed, is it worth while to borrow geometrical ſcales, for weighing a maxim in galantry.

Beſides, I am ſo much averſe to the pedantry of argument, that I would ſooner give up a point, than contend it. Madame de Sevigné, you ſay, is acquainted with a great many female *Platoniſts*.

Agreed

Agreed.——Let her take her *exceptions*, and leave me the *rule*. I will grant too, if ſhe pleaſes, that there are certain *privileged* ſouls in this wicked world——for I never denied the *virtues —of conſtitution*. Theſe women I make her a preſent of alſo. I make no critic upon them. Their characters are irreproachable. They muſt not, however expect encomiums from me. I wiſh them joy——*if poſſible*—and that's enough.

In the mean time, examine them philoſophically, and you will perceive the truth of my original maxim. *The heart muſt be occupied*. If nature prompts not, or inclines them not more particularly to galantry, you'll find that ſome other object has laid hold of their affections, in its ſtead. Some become quite inſenſible to love, becauſe they have expended all the ſentiment they were capable of, upon ſome other paſſion. The Count de Lude, I am told, has not been always regarded with indifference, by Madame de Sevigne—But a moſt parental fondneſs for Madame de Grignan ſwallows up the *whole woman* in her ſoul, at preſent.

She ſays farther, that I am extremely blameable toward my own ſex: if I had the leaſt charity, I ſhould have concealed the faults or imperfections I have been ſo quick-ſighted as to diſcove in them——or to expreſs it more juſtly—that my ſex has made me diſcover in myſelf.

But really Marquis, do you imagine that if all I have ſaid ſhould be printed, women would be angry with me? You do not know them. On the contrary, they would find their account in it greatly,——for in effect, to ſay that they are led toward galantry, by a mechanical impulſe, is in a great meaſure to ſet them at their eaſe. Has

it

it not the appearance of reſtoring the credit of their *fatality*—their *ſtroke of ſympathy*, (c) which they are ſo ready to offer as excuſes for their weakneſs; and in which by the bye, I have ſo little faith. In conſidering love as the reſult of reaſon, you are not aware of the blow you give their pride, by rendering them thus reſponſible for their choice, good or bad.

In ſhort Marquis, women of every character would have reaſon to be ſatisfied with my letters. 'The metaphyſicians, thoſe whom their kind ſtars have peculi rly organized, might there obſerve with triumph, their ſuperiority over others: they would congratulate themſelves upon ſuch advantage, and impute the merit ſolely to their particular virtue. While women of a leſs ſeraphic mold, ought to be much obliged to me for revealing a ſecret that lies heavy at their hearts, it has been made their duty to diſſemble their ſentiments, and they would mainta n this decency, at as little expence of pleaſure as poſſible. They would be pleaſed then, to have the truth diſcovered, without their betraying it themſelves. Whoever therefore, ſhall anatomize their hearts, will do them a moſt grateful piece of ſervice. Thus ſhould I recommend myſelf to our ſex by a double addreſs, reſpectively agreeable; in adopting maxims that favour their inclinations, and by affording to ſome, occaſions of diſplaying their extraordinary delicacy.

Indeed, Marquis, you diſcover a perfect ignorance of women, to imagine they would be offended at my philoſophy upon this ſubject. 'Tis a certain truth they would rather be even ſpoken ill of, than not to be ſpoken of at all. So that had

(c) See the firſt paragrar h of Letter VI.

had I written theſe eſſays with that very uncharitable deſign now charged upon me, you ſee I have a tolerable chance of eſcaping, at leaſt, all *private* reſentment.

But, Madame de Sevigne is alſo uneaſy about the conſequences of my *ſyſtem*: which apprehenſion, from the high opinion I have of her underſtanding, I am ſurpriſed at. By diſarming Cupid of his arrows, by conſidering love as an effect of conſtitution, vanity or caprice, by diſtinguiſhing the humble paſſion itſelf, from the metaphyſical dignity of it, have I not rendered it infinitely leſs dangerous to mankind, than it would be, if according to her *ſyſtem*, we ſhould *conſtellate* it among the virtues? In fine, you may compare me, if you pleaſe, to one of the antient legiſlators, who is reported to have leſſened the power of women over his citizens, by ſhewing them naked.

But I ſhall make a further effort in your favour; and ſince I am taken for a *ſyſtematical* reaſoner, I ſhall not ſeem altogether unworthy of ſo flouriſhing a title. Let us for a while, then diſcuſs the point of galantry, with that method and philoſphy, which might become the moſt ſerious topic.

Is not love a paſſion? Do not your ſevere moraliſts affirm, that paſſions and vices are ſynonymous? Is vice ever more ſeducing, than when it aſſumes the character of virtue? It ought never, therefore, to be ſuffered to appear, but under ſuch diſadvantages, as might alarm the chaſte mind. This, however, was not the deſign of the *Platoniſts*, when they ſo prophanely deified it. And in all ages, have they not endeavoured to authorize the paſſions, by involving them among the pagan hierarcy? Behold! I ſtep forth a reformer

mer—I decry the popular ſuperſtition—I break the vain idol, but confeſs my raſhneſs at the ſame time, and muſt expect a female perſecution for attacking thus their favourite worſhip.

I own I am much concerned upon this account myſelf. They were rare times truly, when women might acknowledge their fond impreſſions, without a bluſh—nay even boaſt their paſſion, and ſhield their *weakneſs* under the *ſtrength* of the deity. But, why muſt poor humanity be ſuperſeded? Why diſclaim its power, and ſearch in heaven [the cauſes of our foibles? Let us abide on earth, and imagine for them here——— We ſhall find their dominion intirely below. (d)

In reality, I have not in any of my letters, expreſsly declaimed againſt love, nor have I adviſed you to leave it out of your ſcheme of life. I know too well the uſefulneſs of ſuch counſels. But I have let you into the true ſecret of the matter; by which I have leſſened the illuſion it might otherwiſe have led you into. I have at leaſt, di-

(d) The ingenious author of the Dialogues of the Gods, in his preface, ſpeaking of the refinements of love, ſays, "I am not certain that morals have "gained much by the change. They have rendered "this paſſion more alluring by taking away every "appearance of vice from it. As it is diſguiſed at "preſent we deliver ourſelves up to the impreſſion, "without a bluſh, and who dares reproach us with a "vice that has ſo much the appearance of a virtue? "Romances are full of admirable ſentiments. All "manner of virtues are here diſplayed. The groſs-"neſs of love is ſubtilized into delicacy, and the "heroes and heroines are certain pure intelligences, "whoſe bodies are but merely *accidents*, which are "by no means inſtrumental to their pleaſures,"

diminiſhed its influence over you, and every day's experience will ſupport my doctrines.

I know that they act very differently in the education of women: but what is the conſequence? they begin by deceiving them, poſſeſs them with as great a fear of love, as old nurſes do of ſpirits. Men are repreſented to them as monſters of perfidy and infidelity. A handſome young fellow preſents himſelf: his ſentiments delicate; behaviour modeſt and reſpectful. The fair one, who has been educated in the manner above mentioned, will immediately nclude ſhe has been impoſed upon. She will find the ſentiments that this ſame *monſter* has excited in her breaſt, to be of a very different kind from thoſe of horror; and as ſoon as ſhe detects any exaggeration, her inſtructors will begin to forfeit all further credit with her.

They miſlead her alſo another way, and how can it well be avoided? They take infinite care not to let them know, or even to ſuffer them to imagine, that they ſhall be attacked by the ſenſes; and that theſe are the moſt dangerous enemies they will have to encounter. In ſhort, they ſpeak to them as if they were perfect angels. The conconſequence of which is, that not having been properly warned of the nature or the attack, they may not be ſufficiently armed to ſuſtain it. How could they ever take it into their heads, of themſelves, that their moſt redoubted adverſary, ſhould be one that they had never once been cautioned againſt? and what ſort of *extempore* defence can they make upon the occaſion?

It is not then, the lover they ſhould have been forewarned of, if it is themſelves.——For what avails the lover's *wiſhing*, without the fair one's *willing?* So that, Marquis, when I acquaint

quaint my ſex, that their weakneſs lies in nature, I do not mean to encourage them to follow their inclinations; but on the contrary, to caution them againſt their greateſt danger. 'Tis like informing the governor of a citidal, that was defending himſelf in the wrong place, being in more hazard of being betrayed within, than conquered from without.

In fine, by rating at their juſt value thoſe ſentimen:s to which women have annexed ſuch ſublime ideas, and by making known the true intention, of even the moſt refined lovers, you may perceive that I pique their vanity to be leſs ambitious of being beloved, and their hearts to receive leſs ſelf-approbation, in loving. And be aſſured, that whenever we can oppoſe pride to pleaſure, ſome advantage will generally be gained, on the part of virtue.

I have had lovers myſelf; but they never could impoſe on me. I well knew the ſcope of their addreſſes. I was certain, that if my ſenſe or character had any ſhare in the motives which determined them to throw themſelves at my feet, it was merely becauſe thoſe merits flattered their vanity. They loved me becauſe I was handſome, and they had deſires. For which reaſon they never obtained more than the ſecond place in my eſteem, the firſt being always occupied by my friends. For friendſhip, I have ever preſerved that deference, that conſtancy and reſpect, which ſo noble a ſentiment deſerves—one ſo worthy of poſſeſſing th e generous mind —In a word, I have always conceived a diffidence of thoſe hearts, where love appeared to be the principal gueſt. This weakneſs degraded them in my eyes; and I regarded thoſe perſons as incapable of exalting

their

their ſouls to ſentiments of true eſteem, toward a woman whom they had principally wiſhed to enjoy.

You ſee then, Marquis, that the conſequences to be drawn from my premiſſes, are by no means dangerous. All that can be ſaid to me by perſons of any ſenſe, is, that I have taken a great deal of idle pains to prove to you a propoſition, that was obvious enough before. But your inexperience and curioſity muſt be my apology, for what I have written, or may hereafter ſay to you, upon this ſubject.

THE END *of the* FIRST PART.

THE LETTERS OF

Mademoiſelle Ninon de l'Enclos

TO THE

Marquis de Sevigné.

PART II.

LETTER XXVIII.

YOU are certainly right, Marquis.—The taſte and talent that the Counteſs has for muſic, will bring a great addition both to your love and happineſs. I have frequently told women, infinite advantages they might reap, from the due improvement and exerciſe of their accompliſhments. There are very few occaſions, upon which they would not be ſerviceable to them.

Women generally imagine that they have nothing to fear but the preſence of the lover. True indeed

indeed, that they may have then, two enemies to contend with at a time; their paſſion and the party. But when the lovers has retired, the love ſtill remains; and the progreſs it makes in ſolitude, though leſs perceiveable, is not the leſs dangerous. At ſuch intervals as theſe, the playing on a harpſichord, painting a flower, or reading ſome work of genius, may turn aſide the thoughts from ideas too alluring, and fix the attention upon ſafer objects. All theſe occupations, then, which employ the mind, are ſo many *countermines* to temptation. (e)

A lover has an opportunity of entertaining his miſtreſs apart. ſhe has beauty and good humour only: what can he do with her? how amuſe himſelf, without ſenſe or vanity? Love is active; 'tis a voracious flame, and ſtill demands freſh fuel. If it has nothing but objects of ſenſe, to exerciſe itſelf upon, it muſt lay hold on thoſe, and make the beſt of them. In ſhort, if the *mind* be not employed, the *ſenſes* will. He is reduced to the neceſſity of *dumb-ſhew*, and of explaining his paſſion in the leaſt equivocal manner, to a perſon who is not capable of underſtanding a more delicate language.

It is not meerly by reſiſtleſs attempts, or reſenting freedoms, that women can expect to preſerve their virtue. When they ſuffer themſelves to be attacked, after ſuch a manner, their very defence alarms the ſenſes; the emotions of re-

ſiſtance

(e) Shakeſpear has a fine poetical moral, upon this ſubject, in his *Midſummer Night's Dream*.

" Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell,——
" It was upon a little weſtern flower.
" Before milk-white--now purple with love's wound;
" And maidens call it *Love in idleneſs*."

ſiſtance hazard their defeat; and they are yielding, even in the conflict. But 'tis by preſonting other and various objects, to the lovers attention, that they may beſt evade ſuch enterprizes; the mortification and danger of which, I am ſorry to ſay, they have themſelves moſtly to charge with: for tis almoſt certain, that men rarely make attempts, except where indiſcretions have given the encouragement.

There is no man of any education, or knowledge of the world, but can eaſily judge to what degree of freedom he may venture to extend his behaviour. For which reaſon, I have never attended to women, who have complained to me of a lover's rudeneſs. Upon examination, I have generally found that ſome imprudent or inconſiderate conduct of theirs, firſt gave occaſion to it. Women have no other way left, of *begging the queſtion*.

But indeed our want of ſenſe or educatīon may, as I hinted before, ſubject us, equally with our indiſcretions, to the ſame misfortune. For, with a woman who has neither wit or accompliſhment, what can a man do, but *enterprize?* He has no other way to rid his time of her, but to romp or teaze. He cannot pretend to introduce any other topic of converſation, except her beauty, with the deep impreſſion it has made upon his ſenſes; and one muſt uſe the language of the ſenſes, to expreſs their effect. Nay, how can ſhe ſeem convinced of your paſſion, declare her ſympathy, or return your flame, but by the ſenſes alone? by ſhewing her emotions equal to your own? or at beſt, her expiring chaſtity has nothing left to oppoſe, but peeviſhneſs only—the laſt reſource of a ſilly woman: and a wretched one it is!

What

What advantage, on the contrary, has a woman of addreſs and ſpirit? A lively repartee, a diſconcerting raillery, a quick reſentment, an apt quotation, or an applicable ſtory, are not theſe ſo many *diverſions* in her favour, and ſo much good time gained on the ſide of virtue?

Women's chief misfortune is certainly this; their not having been rendered capable of occupying their minds with objects worthy their attention; which renders love a more violent paſſion in their breaſts, than it uſually is among men. But they poſſeſs at the ſame time a lucky ſentiment, which under proper direction, is of admirable ſervice to them. Their vanity is at leaſt equal to their ſenſibility. Oppoſe one to the other. While a woman is taken up with the ambition of pleaſing, otherwiſe than by her perſon, ſhe for the time, attends not to the very ſentiment that has excited her deſire to charm.—In reality, this ſame ſentiment will nevertheleſs, continue to be the *determining motive*, if I may uſe a term of ſcience, but it will ceaſe to be the preſent and immediate object of her paſſion; which let me aſſure you, is a great point gained. Intirely occupied in acquiring that kind of eminence ſhe has ſet her heart upon, this very aim, though guided by love itſelf, will turn againſt it, by dividing the attention of the mind, and the affections of the heart.—This is perplexing the enemy, by preſenting two objects of operation, at once.

You will tell me perhaps, that according to this reaſoning, women of wit and talents ſhould be looked upon as impregnable; and that men naturally hating trouble, ſhould avoid ſuch purſuit. And yet, you'll add, that the ſtupid, as well

well as the ſenſible, equally addreſs ſuch women. —'Tis very true.—But the true reaſon alſo is, that blockheads know not the difficulty, and that men of ſpirit love to ſurmount it.

Beſides, you are a military man, Marquis, and ought you not to agree with my maxim, about talents? Suppoſe you ſhould obtain the conduct of a ſiege, on the approaching campaign, would you be pleaſed that the governor, from an opinion that the town was not tenable, ſhould ſurrender, before you could have an opportunity of ſignalizing yourſelf? I know you would not. You would have him hold out. The more care he takes of his own glory, the higher he raiſes yours.

In love, as well as war, the pleaſure of conqueſt is meaſured by the difficulty. Shall I ſpeak out? I am tempted to carry the parellel farther. This is the danger of entering into ſuch ſubjects. The true merit of a woman, conſiſts perhaps leſs, in not yielding at all, than in making ſuch a defence, as may intitle her to the honours of war

To proceed. If a woman has had the misfortune to be overcome, what fetters can ſhe forge, to bind the ſucceſsful lover, if ſhe be deficient in ſenſe or talents! I acknowledge indeed, that female education is not over rich in theſe endowments. Yet, if you conſider the matter a little, you'll agree, that there is hardly any woman, who with proper application of time and common ſenſe, might not procure ſome one or mon thoſe advantages: the difference lying y, i the more or leſs.

But we are naturally too indol ıt for ſuch ſpirited efforts. We find beauty to be an univerſal merit. This method of winning hearts, requires

no manner of trouble, and we could wiſh there were no other. Blind that we are! we never conſider that though beauty and talents equally gain admirers; the firſt endangers the poſſeſſor, while the latter ſerves for their defence.

In reality, beauty prepares but mortification and regret, againſt the quick period of its decay. Would you know the reaſon? becauſe it has betrayed us into a neglect of more permanent attractions. During its frail empire, we find ourſelves prized, ſought, and celebrated. We hold our court. Our ſhort ſight foreſees no end of admiration.—But, oh! the ſolitude, horrible, when age or accident ſhall have wreſted from us, the poor, the only ſtay of our dominion! I could wiſh then, (the alluſion is not elegant, but it will expreſs my ſenſe) that beauty ſerved only as a *ſign*, to declare the *entertainment* within.

Let us conclude therefore, Marquis, that in love; ſenſe and talents are of the higheſt conſequence. This is a *comedy*, in which the *acts* are the ſhorteſt, and the *interludes* the longeſt of any. How ſhall we amuſe the intervals of dalliance, without the reſources of the underſtanding, Poſſeſſion places all women on a level, and ſubjects them equally to your inconſtancy. The beautiful have in this particular, but little advantage over the homely. Senſe and accompliſhments make the chief difference between them. Theſe alone ſupply that charming variety in love and which relieves from tedioufneſs and diſguſt.

nothing but the improvement of the

under can repleniſh tha irkſome void in the heart, is conſequ nt upon a paſſion gratified —Nor is there any thing which can poſſibly be more ſerviceable to us, in whatever

ſituation

ſituation we may happen to be circumſtanced; whether in retarding our defeat, in rendering it more richly prized, or in aſſiſting us to regain our empire. Even our lovers reap advantage from them. How many accompliſhments ſhould they encourage in us, though they turn at firſt, againſt themſelves? Thus the Counteſs by cultivating her excellent talent for muſic, acts equally agreeable both to your intereſt and her own.

I have read over my letter, dear Marquis, and am afraid you will think it too grave and philoſophic. This is the conſequence of bad company. I ſupped laſt night with Monſieur de la Rochefaucault, and I never part from him, without being infected after this manner, for a day or two, at leaſt.

LET

LETTER XXIX.

I Agree with you, Marquis, that the Counteſs puniſhes you too ſeverely, for the confeſſion you have ſurprized her into. Is it your fault that ſhe could not preſerve her own ſecret? She has, however, advanced too far for a retreat now. We will indulge her in a few mortifying reflections on the occaſion; but to carry it ſo far as to refuſe your viſits for thee days, to direct them to tell you that ſhe was retiring into the country for a month, and to return your tender billets with unbroken ſeals, is in my opinion, a very caprice of virtue. But after all, prithee deſpair not. If ſhe was really indifferent, truſt me ſhe would be leſs ſevere.

Do not miſtake the m upon ſuch occaſi-
ons, women are leſs ou out of humour with the
lover than themſelves They are mortified to
and their weakneſs is re o betray them every
moment: they therefore, ſh you, and con-
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affect But aſſu hat one day's
capric ort s the lover's
ſucce h n affiduity.
The foon begin reproach
herſelf, ingu ouſneſs of behaviour,
ſhe quick rce th injuſtice r conduct,
ould m e repa for it ruſhes un-
va to the contrary extre
I am d at that your letter,
where you ountes has ap-
peared to love haracter has been in-
tirely changed. The cauſe of this alteration, I
am

am quite unacquainted with. All I know is, that ſhe has of late preſented herſelf to the world, a perfectly *Lady Townly*; and ſo gay a life has been the more remarkable, as her conduct was the very reverſe, while her huſband lived. You remember when you were firſt acquainted with her, that ſhe was lively, even to exceſs; heedleſs, haughty, coquetiſh; and appeared perfectly incapable of a ſerious attachment. And you tell me now, that ſhe is become grave and reſerved: that ſhe ſeems to be abſent, timid and obliging: ſentiment has ſucceeded to diſſipation, and natural manners have taken the place of affected ones. In fine, ſhe appears to enter ſo well into her preſent character, that you conclude it to be her real one; and that the former, was but a borrowed part.

All this would certainly puzzle my philoſophy, if I could not account for the metamorphoſe, as an effect of love. I am much miſtaken, if the oppoſition you meet with at preſent, be not an earneſt of the moſt complete victory to you; which is the more aſſured, becauſe ſhe has taken every meaſure in her power, to diſpute it with you.

If you ſtill keep your object in view, if you ſuffer no time or place to eſcape you, ſo as that ſhe may remark the aſſiduity of your regards—if you refrain from urging, for a while, your paſſion, preſerving at the ſame time, an attentive, reſpectful, but enamoured air, what muſt be the conſequence? She cannot withhold from you that regard which one is naturally inclined to pay, in ſuch circumſtances, even to a perſon, one is indifferent to. Women beſides, have an inexhauſtible fund of kindneſs, for thoſe who love them!

which you men are perfectly well apprized of; and 'tis this that keeps up your ſpirits, when we appear to uſe you ill. You know that your preſence, your aſſiduities, and the dejected air you aſſume, have their effect, and conquer at length our diſdain. You conclude, that thoſe whom our virtue keeps at the greateſt diſtance, are certainly thoſe, who alarm it the moſt.—And unluckily, your ſentiment is but too juſt.

Our prudence keeps us aloof, where we apprehend the engagement may be to our diſadvantage: we do ſometimes more, even brave the enemy, whoſe attack we dare not wait for. In a word, the courage of a woman is always capable of a firſt effort; but rarely repeats it. The very exceſs of its violence, is often the cauſe of its ſubſiding too ſoon. The mind has but a certain degree of ſtrength, and when that is exhauſted by its own exertion, it naturally ſinks into indolence; and the apprehenſion of its own weakneſs, diſcourages it from any further activity. A perſon may ſupport the firſt onſet of an enemy, with reſolution, whom the experienced difficulty may deter, on the ſecond.

A woman, perſuaded that ſhe has tried every thing in her power, to defend herſelf from a paſſion which inthralls her, and ſatisfied with the conflicts ſhe has already ſuſtained, begins ſoon to conclude, that all further reſiſtance againſt the force of love, muſt be in vain; and if ſhe ſtill holds out, it is not from any reſource, yet remaining within herſelf: her ſecurity ariſes from the opinion of her chaſtity, with which ſhe has inſpired the lover, and the deſpair which her long reſiſtance may have poſſeſſed him with.

So

So that every prudent woman ſhould begin with making a good defence; and pride alone is ſufficient to ſpirit them up to this. But unhappily, ye foreſee the means of conqueſt.—Perſevere, and they are not impregnable.—And ye are ſo ſhamefully indelicate, that provided ye obtain the prize, ye remain indifferent, whether your ſucceſs be owing to opportunity, or free conſent

In fine, Marquis, the extreme precaution the Counteſs uſes againſt you, proves ſufficiently your power over her. Were you an object indifferent to her, would ſhe take ſuch pains to fly you? I promiſe you ſhe would not pay you ſo great a compliment. But lovers are unaccountable creatures.——always ingenious to torment themſelves, the habit of occupying the mind with one dear object only, is ſo ſtrong in them, that they would rather think of it diſagreeably, than not at all.

However, I have great compaſſion for you. Smitten as you are, your ſituation is moſt dolorous. My poor Marquis, how they uſe it!

Adieu.

LETTER XXX.

I AM pleaſed at finding, before I ſet out for the country, that you begin to appear ſomewhat more tranquil in your mind. I frankly confeſs, that if the Counteſs had perſevered in her ſeverity, I ſhould have imagined, not that ſhe was inſenſible, but that ſome more lucky rival had intervened. Such a reſiſtance would have appeared beyond the power of reaſon, ſuppoſing her to have ſuſtained the ſiege alone: for be aſſured, Marquis, that a woman is never more untractable, than when the diſdain ſhe manifeſts to other admirers, ariſes from the particular attachment ſhe may have towards a favoured lover.

What you tell me, however, convinces me that you are boloved, and you alone are ſo. I ſhall ſoon be able to give you certain and conſtant accounts of this matter, for I am reſolved to examine the Counteſs in perſon, myſelf. This declaration doubtleſs ſurprizes you; but your aſtoniſhment will ceaſe, when I tell you, that Madame de la Sabliere's villa, whither I am going to ſpend a week, joins the eſtate of your amiable widow; and you inform me that ſhe has already ſet out for the country. Add our vicinity to the extreme deſire I have to be acquainted with her, and you will no longer be ſurprized at the promiſe I have now made you.

They will not give me time to finiſh my lettet, nor even to ſend it. I muſt ſet out this inſtant — My fellow traveller rallies me, and fancies I am penning a billet-doux.—I let her amuſe herſelf, but ſhall carry this letter with me, to finiſh in the country.

Adieu.

P. S. It ſeems then, that Madame de Grignan's illneſs is to prevent your paying us a viſit in our retirement.

From the Chateau de - - - - - -

I write to you from the Counteſs's, my dear Marquis.——This is the third day I have paſſed here. You may judge from this, that I am on good terms with your beloved fair. She is really an amiable woman: I am quite charmed with her. I ſometimes doubt whether you deſerve to poſſeſs ſuch a heart as hers. Behold me now, her choſen confidante.—She has told me all her ſentiments of you, and I do not deſpair of being able to diſcover the motives of that inconſiſtency, which you have remarked in her character, before I return to Paris.

I dare not ſay more to you at preſent.—I may be ſurprized while I am writing; and I would not have it even ſuſpected, that I correſpond with you from hence.

In haſte,—Adieu.

LETTER XXXI.

I HAVE ſomething to tell you, Marquis, worth attending to. I was reſolved to keep my word with you; and while I was framing my addreſs, in order to extract the ſecret from the Counteſs, a lucky chance ſaved me any farther trouble. You know the confidence ſhe places in Monſieur le la Sabliere. She was juſt now with him in one of the arbours of her garden: I croſſed a parterre to join them, and was near the door when I heard your name mentioned. I ſtopt ſhort, and was not perceived: I overheard every word, and am now retired to give you a liberal account of the whole converſation.

"I have not been able, it ſeems, (ſaid ſhe) to hide from your penetration, my regards for the Marquis de Sevigné; and you cannot reconcile the ſerioufneſs of a ſettled paſſion, with the livelineſs of my former character. But you will be much more aſtoniſhed, when I inform you that my exterior behaviour marks not my true character; that the gravity which ſurprizes you at preſent, is but a recurrence to my real ſelf; and in a word, that I have only aſſumed the appearance of a *fine Lady*, through deſign.

"Perhaps you imagine, that women can diſguiſe only their imperfections; but they ſometimes carry it farther, Sir, of which I am myſelf one example: they can diſguiſe even their virtues! And ſince I have entered upon it, I am tempted, at the hazard of tiring your patience, to acquaint you with the ſingular proceſs, which conducted me to this point.

"During

" During my husband's life, I lived intirely in the country. You knew the Count, and his love of retirement. Upon his death, I thought it proper to come a little into the world; but was for some time embarrassed about the fittest character for me to appear in. I examined myself closely —There is no equivocating with one's self.——I found my love of social pleasures strong; but governed at the same time by a firm resolve, to preserve a pureness of moral throughout. How to blend these happily together, became then the question. It appeared to me an extreme difficulty, to frame any system of conduct, that without laying me open to the censure of the world, on one hand, should not deprive me of its most flattering pleasures, on the other.

" I reasoned with myself thus. Destined to associate among men, formed to please them, and partake a mutual happiness together, we must expect to suffer likewise from their faults; and the one we have chiefly to reproach them with, is their ungenerous calumny. One would imagine that the whole scheme of our education, was to render us compleat objects of love; and in truth, this is the only passion which is permitted us: yet, by a most unaccountable and severe contradiction, they leave us a right to, but one sort of fame, which is that of resisting all the impulses of this very passion. I deliberated then with myself, about the best measures for accommodating my conduct to such opposite extremes, at the same time; and found myself surrounded by difficulties on all sides.

" We are simple enough thought I, on our first entrance into life, to conceive the highest felicity, to consist in mutual love: we then suppose this

this paſſion to be founded on eſteem, ſuſtained by the acknowledgment of every amiable quality, refined by the moſt perfect delicacy of ſentiment, unſullied by the leaſt idea, *unſeraphic*; and finally, corroborated by the reciprocal confidence, and unreſtrained overflowings of two fond, chaſte, and faithful hearts, now melted into one. But, unfortunately, this image, ſo flattering for our ſex, flies from us, like an *Utopian* dream, whenever we try to fold it in our embrace. We are *ſoon* undeceived—and yet generally too *late*.

" At my firſt obſervations on men, I was child enough to be equally ſcandalized at their inconſtancy and treachery: but, upon reflection, one muſt agree, that the firſt of theſe is rather an *imperfection*, than a *fault*, and renders themſelves more *unhappy*, than *guilty*. When 'tis conſidered of what ſtuff their hearts are made, one cannot expect that firſt impreſſions ſhall preclude all future forms. But, are we to grant the ſame indulgence to their other vice? Moſt men attack us in cool blood, to make us ſerve for their amuſement, or to ſacrifice us to their vanity;—to fill up the vacation of an idle life, or to atchieve a ſort of character, at the ungenerous expence of ours. The greater number are of this kind: and how ſhall one be able to diſtinguiſh them from genuine lovers? Outward appearances are both the ſame; and he who *feigns* a paſſion, has odds againſt him, who *feels* it.

" We are beſides, ſilly dupes enough to conſider love as our principal concern, while you men treat it as an amuſement only. We rarely yield our perſons without our hearts, while you are indelicate enough to make *deſire* ſupply the place of *paſſion*. We believe conſtancy to be a duty; you change

change upon the firſt diſguſt. You ſcarce preſerve decency in quitting a miſtreſs, the poſſeſſion of whom, ſix months before, conſtituted your chief happineſs and pride; while the forſaken fair one may not ill compound, if the faithleſs lover does not give her ſtill further reaſons to repent her confidence in him.

"These reflections then, wrought up my mind to the moſt ſerious philoſophy; and I thus went on debating:—If love draws ſuch a train of evils after it; a woman, who has any manner of eſteem for her reputation or repoſe, ſhould cancel this paſſion quite out of her ſcheme of life. But how to compound this matter with our hearts! Our hearts are formed for love, and love is itſelf involuntary? How then annihilate a paſſion interwoven with our nature? our ſole reſource muſt be to regulate it. Let us deliberate upon the beſt means of compaſſing ſo deſirable an end.

"What kind of love is moſt dangerous? Certainly that which occupies the ſoul intire, which ſwallows up all other paſſions, renders us incapable of any other ſentiment, and diſpoſes us to ſacrifice every thing to the object beloved.

"Which are the characters ſuſceptible of ſuch affections? Without doubt the moſt ſolid ones; thoſe of the leaſt outward ſhew; thoſe which unite together the beſt ſenſe with the nobleſt mind, and moſt elevated ſentiment.

"What kind of men are the moſt formidable to a woman of this complexion? Thoſe who poſſeſs no other ſhining qualities but what are ſufficient to place ſocial merit in its proper light. (f)

Perſons

(f) The ſenſe of this paſſage does not occur at firſt reading; but the meaning appears to be, that the moſt

Perſons of this ſtamp are always dangerous company for a woman of thought and reflection. 'Tis true, that they are very rare now-a days, and that there never was, perhaps, an age more ſecure than the preſent, for defending us from the dominion of extraordinary paſſions. But ſome chance, however, may unluckily throw ſuch an adventure in one's way.

" Moral philoſophers agree, that we every one of us are born with a certain portion of ſenſibility, deſtined to be exerciſed upon ſome particular object or other —Women of ſenſe are not to be won by any of thoſe trivial accompliſhments which captivate the generality of their ſex. But when an object worthy of their attention preſents itſelf, they quickly comprehend its intire merit. Their attachments are meaſured by the extent of their underſtanding.—They are incapable of middling affections. We ſhould therefore keep clear of ſuch female characters as theſe, and likewiſe avoid the acquaintance and converſe of ſuch men, as I have juſt deſcribed, if we would conſult the eaſe of our hearts, and peace of our minds.

" How then to frame a ſyſtem of conduct which may procure us this two-fold advantage, at the ſame time,—to preſerve us from too deep impreſſions, and keep thoſe perſons at a diſtance, who are capable of inſpiring them? Let us aſſume ſuch an outward behaviour, as may at leaſt diſcourage men from exerting any of their moſt eſtimable qualities befor us. Let us ſubject them to the mortifying neceſſity of attempting to win us by trivial

moſt brilliant qualities are not often the moſt amiable; and that thoſe, which without alarming, inſenſibly win upon the affections, have generally the ſureſt effect.

trivial addreſs, and drawing-room accompliſhments: the ridiculous affectation of which may ſerve to ſupply us with ſhields againſt their aſſaults. What kind of intrenchment may we throw ourſelves into, in order to ſtand covered by ſo many bulwarks? Even the ſhallow province of a *fine lady*.

" You muſt be doubtleſs ſurprized at the ſingular reſult of ſuch philoſophic reaſonings; but you will be much more ſo, when you ſhall hear me argue in form to prove the juſtneſs of this reſolve. Lend your ears a little longer patience. ——I know the excellence of your judgment, nor do I think myſelf quite deficient in underſtanding, notwithſtanding the frivolous character I have for ſome time ſuſtained; and by the time I ſhall have finiſhed my harangue, flatter myſelf that we may both be of accord upon this topic.

" Do you imagine that an outward ſeverity of manners can defend the heart from its foibles? Wretched reſource! When a woman once becomes a victim to her weakneſs, ſhe muſt be only the more humbled, in proportion to the character ſhe had before attempted to impoſe upon the world. The higher pride ſhe had placed in her virtue, the greater advantage ſhe affords to malicious cenſure.

" What ideas beſides, do the world generally form of a virtuous woman? Are not men diſingenuous enough to imagine, that the chaſteſt woman is ſhe who can beſt conceal her weakneſs; or by a forced retreat puts it out of her power to fall a ſacrifice to it? They carry ſtill their want of charity farther, ſo much afraid are they of admitting the leaſt kind of perfection in us, even to ſuppoſe that we continue in a ſtate of conſtant warfare with ourſelves, while we maintain any manner of

of ſtruggle with them. There never was a modeſt woman, ſays a certain friend of ours, (g) who was not weary of her condition.

" And after all, what præmium is the reward of thoſe ſelf-denials they ſuppoſe we condemn ourſelves to? Do they raiſe altars to ſuch heroic efforts? Not a ſingle ſod! The beſt character, according to them, is that which paſſes through life unnotic'd. (h) That is, a perfect indifference on their part, and a profound oblivion, is the higheſt price the world ſets upon our virtue. Muſt we not have an inexhauſtible ſtock, to preſerve it upon ſuch conditions? Might not ſuch hard meaſure tempt one to decline the conflict? But there are ſome ſerious conſiderations, which demand our attention.

" Diſhonour treads cloſe upon the heels of frailty. Age is wretched enough in itſelf.—What a ſtate then, muſt it be, when paſſed in infamy and remorſe! What price too high for an exemption? At firſt thought, I concluded that there was no other ſecurity from theſe ills, but by condemning one's ſelf to a retired and auſtere life, and I did not perceive my philoſophy ſturdy enough to encounter it. But upon farther conſideration, I determined within myſelf, that the maſque of a *fine lady* would be the beſt dreſs for a woman to appear in, who would reconcile pleaſure and virtue together. By your ſmilling, I perceive that you look upon my propoſition as a paradox; but believe

(g) Rochefaucault.
(h) Pope ſays,
" Moſt women have no character at all."——
" Matter too ſoft a laſting mark to bear;
" And beſt diſtinguiſh d by black, brown, or fair."

Young alſo,
" Their higheſt praiſe, to live and die unknown."

believe me there is more conſiſtency in it, than one might at firſt imagine.

" Is a *fine lady* required to have any attachment? Does any one expect tenderneſs or ſenſibility from her? 'Tis ſufficient if ſhe be but agreeable, and accompliſhed in mere outward demeanour. If ſhe carries herſelf with gaiety and ſpirit, through the character ſhe hath taken upon her to perſonate, who troubles themſelves whether ſhe has a heart, or no? Perſon, air, caprice, faſhionable chat, frolic, and particular whims, are the only things expected from her. She may be as virtuous as ſhe pleaſes, without interruption. Suppoſe a man ſhould take it into his head to attack her; a ſlight reſiſtance would quickly make him *raiſe the ſiege*; he would conclude the place to be already won, and wait patiently his turn. His perſeverance might rather hurt him: it would betray an ignorance of the deference due to meaſures taken before his ſummons; ſo that after an extraordinary manner, ſhe may owe her ſafety, meerly to the ill opinion that is conceived of her.

" I perceive by your countenance what you are going to ſay,—That the character of a *fine lady* might injure my reputation, and leave me ſubject to thoſe very inconveniences I would avoid. Is not this your objection? But don't you know, Sir, that the moſt ſtrict conduct may not be ſufficient to ſcreen us from malice and ſlander? Men are generally the arbiters of our fame; and the good as well as bad opinions they frame of us, are often equally falſe. Prejudice or accident determine their judgments; and our credit depends frequently, leſs upon real merit, than on the luckineſs of circumſtances. The hope of obtaining an honourable rank then, in their heraldry, ſhould be

be the leaſt part of our incitement to a virtuous life: our firſt inducement ought to be, the ſtanding well with our own minds, and to be able to ſay to one's ſelf, *Whatever may be the opinion of the world, I have, thank Heaven, nothing to reproach my own heart with.* But after all, virtue is *the one thing needful*, and the motives are very little material.

" I remained convinced then, upon the whole, that I could not conduct myſelf more prudently, on ſetting out in the world, than by putting on the vizard which I had deemed fitteſt, both for my ſafety and repoſe. I attached myſelf more cloſely to the friend who had aſſiſted me with her counſels. This was the Marchioneſs de * * * *, my relation. Our conformity of ſentiments and manners, was perfect; we frequented the ſame company: charity for our neighbour, was not, in truth, our favourite virtue. We entered the circle as the ſole maſkers at a ball; we trifled away our time there, and led others into the rendering themſelves ridiculous: and after we had ſufficiently amuſed ourſelves with this farce, our entertainment did not end here; it was renewed again, when we retired together, to our dear *tete-a-tete*. —How ſilly the women appeared, and what empty creatures the men! What fopperies, what impertinencies! If perchance, among the crowd, we happened to *detect* a perſon capable of making himſelf feared—that is, eſteemed—we diſconcerted him by our airs, by the ſlight notice we affected to take of him, and by the preference we ſeemed to give to thoſe who merited it the leaſt. In fine, in order to preſerve our happy inſenſibility, we made conſtant choice of the moſt inſignificant company we could pick up.

" This

" This conduct preſerved us for a long time, from the dangerous ſhoals of love, and relieved us alſo, from that irkſome tedioufneſs of life, which a more formal and puritanical virtue would have ſubjected us to. Trifling, heedleſs, volatile, —you may add coquettiſh, if you will, before the world; but ſerious, rational, and virtuous, in our own eyes, we compounded with ourſelves for our outward character. The generality of men we met with, were not much to be apprehended; and thoſe who gave us the leaſt alarm, were obliged to play the fool, to be admitted or accepted of in our ſociety.

" However, there has at length happened an adventure, which has brought me to ſuſpect the ſufficiency of my ſcheme of conduct; for I find that it has not been able intirely to guard me from the danger I ſought to ſhun. My own experience has convinced me, that love is an invader, who by ſurrounding us on all ſides, is ſure to find them ſome unguarded poſt to make his entrance at: I know not by what deſtiny the Marquis de Sevigne has rendered all my projects fruitleſs: In ſpite of all my outguards, he has ſurprized the avenues of my heart. Whatever reſources I have ſummoned to my aid, he has had the fortune to win over to his party, and my reaſon, inſtead of aſſiſting me in the conflict, has but betrayed me to the victor.

" I ſhall not, however, repine at his conqueſt, if he ſhould not give me other cauſe to lament it. He has won upon my weakneſs ſo far, that I have not been able to conceal my ſentiments from him; and the only concern I have at preſent, is, leſt he ſhould imagine that I have not hitherto *perſonated* an inſignificant character, but *performed* a real one And though my throwing off this diſguiſe, may

may perhaps render me leſs amiable in his eyes—for I do affirm, that ſuperficial qualities generally captivate men, more than ſolid ones,—I would, however reveal myſelf to him in my genuine character: for, I ſhould bluſh to owe his affections to mock appearances, belying both my heart, mind, and underſtanding."

"I am Madam, (replied Monſieur de la Sabliere) ſtill leſs ſurprized at the novelties of your project, than at the addreſs with which you have been able to render ſo ſingular a notion plauſible. I really think that it is impoſſible to ramble with more method. But you have not met with the general fate of projectors, who take round-about ways to avoid the beaten track, yet fall into the ſame inconveniences often, with the common high road traveller. Now to make uſe of the priviledge you have allowed me, of ſpeaking my opinion freely; believe me, Madam, that the beſt means of inſuring your repoſe, is ever to act up, without diſguiſe, to the character of a rational creature. One is always ſure to be a gainer, upon any manner of compoſition with virtue."

When I perceived the converſation begin to take this ſerious turn, I apprehended that it might be drawing toward a concluſion; and therefore haſtily retired without being detected, and have given myſelf the pleaſure of ſatisfying your curioſity, according to promiſe.

Did you ever ſee ſo long a letter? We ſhall return to Paris, in two days.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

WELL Marquis, we are returned again, at laſt; but the *advices* we bring you, will be very far from welcome. You never in your life had a fairer occaſion of accuſing women of caprice. My laſt letter was to aſſure you that we loved you mightily; and the preſent is to inform you of the contrary. We have taken ſtrange reſolutions againſt you.—Tremble—for it is a point determined.

The Counteſs, in ſhort, is reſolved to love you for the future, intirely at her eaſe, and without the leaſt expence to her reputation or repoſe. She has foreſeen the conſequences of ſuch a flame as yours, and cannot reflect upon them without terror. She has, therefore, taken the pious reſolution of arreſting its further progreſs. Let not the proofs ſhe has indiſcreetly given you of her regards, flatter you with the leaſt manner of hope. You men imagine that after a woman has once confeſſed her paſſion, ſhe has loſt the power to break her chain. You deceive yourſelf in this. The Counteſs is more miſtreſs of herſelf in this particular, than perhaps you imagine; and I own ingenuouſly, that to my friendly counſels ſhe is indebted for ſome part of her firmneſs.

You muſt reckon no longer upon my letters; and in truth you will not have much farther occaſion for them, toward helping you to a thorough knowledge of women. I begin to repent me, that I have ſupplied you with too many arms already, againſt them; without which, do you imagine you would ever have won the Counteſs?

I con

I confeſs that I have hitherto, judged too ſeverely of my ſex, and here offer up my palinade. (a) I am truly ſenſible of my *libel* at preſent. There are, I believe, among women, more real and eſſential virtues, than I had heretofore imagined. What depth of underſtanding! What a conſtellation of eſtimable qualities is our charming friend poſſeſſed of! No, Marquis, I could not withhold from her my tendereſt affections; and without the ſmalleſt regard to your intereſts, I have moſt cordially entered into the ſtrongeſt alliance with her, offenſive and defenſive, againſt you.

You may reſent my defection; but has not the confidence ſhe has repoſed in me, a right to claim the ſtricteſt fealty? I will not even conceal my treachery from you—I have betrayed you ſo far, as really to apprize her of thoſe advantages, you might poſſibly profit yourſelf of, from the ſecrets I have let you into, of the female breaſt.

" I perceive (ſaid ſhe) how formidable a lover is likely to be, who joined to a perfect knowledge of the heart, poſſeſſes at the ſame time, the engaging talent of explaining and expreſſing his paſſion, with addreſs and ſentiment. What effect may he not have, upon a woman who reflects and diſcerns? I know it; 'tis by the aſſiſtance of her very underſtanding, that he wins her. He has the art to employ her own wit againſt herſelf, to juſtify to her reaſon the errors he is betraying her into.

" A miſtreſs, beſides, thinks herſelf bound to ſacrifices in proportion to the merit of her lover. With an ordinary one, a weakneſs is a weakneſs, and we bluſh for it; but with an extraordinary

(a) A claſſical term for a recantation.

one

one, 'tis a tribute due to his desert; and is also a proof of our own discernment.—It compliments our taste, and we are proud to own it. Thus by adding to our vanity, what is lopped off from virtue, we become quite insensible to the lapses of our own weakness." These are, at present, the cautious sentiments of the Countess, and I perceive not the least gleam of hope for you, dawning through them.

I acknowledge that it might have been better to have made these reflections between ourselves, without letting you at all into the secret; and this was truly our first resolve. But could I act so disengenuous a part, to operate underhand against you? Would not this have been the height of perfidy? Besides, by so clandestine a proceeding, we might have betrayed some fear about the danger, and you see me have bravery enough to advise you of our very plan of defence. Come on then, Marquis; our expectation of the attack rises even to impatience.—Would you learn why? Because we can now attend your march, without a pulse-beat. Do not flatter yourself it is any longer a tender mistress you have to cope with—This would be too weak an adversary.—Such a courage is not much to be depended on. No—'tis me—a champion in cool blood, who thinks herself engaged in honour to support the weaker efforts of her friend and ally. —Yes—I can pry into the secret foldings of your heart, spy out its sinister aims, parry them, and render fruitless every artifice of your machinations. Accuse me of treachery, if you will; but come to us this evening, and I will convince you of the perfect equity and impartiality of my conduct, throughout this whole affair.

While

While your inexperience needed to be informed, encouraged, and ſuſtained, my zeal for your ſervice induced me to ſacrifice every thing to your intereſts. The Counteſs had, at that time, every advantage on her ſide. The complexion of affairs is quite altered. All her pride, at preſent, is hardly ſufficient to defend her. Formerly ſhe had her own indifference, and what was ſtill ſafer, your bad addreſs, in her favour. You are now, a perfect maſter of galantry; while ſhe is ſcarcely miſtreſs of—herſelf. In ſuch circumſtances, to have continued the war with you againſt her, betray the confidence ſhe had placed in me, refuſe her the ſuccour ſhe had a right to call for, if you have the leaſt ingenuouſneſs in you, would by your own confeſſion, have been a crying ſin. I would then, for the future, repair the miſchief I may have done in revealing our ſecrets, and initiating you into our myſteries.

I know not how it is, but I really feel ſuch a pleaſure in traverſing your amour in this place, that one would imagine I had undertaken it from ſome ſelf intereſted view of my own: but you know how far only my pretenſions upon you extend.—My ſentiments toward you ſhall ever continue the ſame; and on your part, I dare ſay that you are too candid, to ſuffer this activity for my friend, to diminiſh the leaſt of your eſteem for me. Adieu——Fly to the Counteſs now, you have free leave.

LET-

LETTER XXXIII.

WHAT, Marquis, a couple of women then, have frightened you! You deſpair at once, of ſucceſs, becauſe ſuch redoubted Amazons have taken arms againſt you! See, ſee him flying from the field! Who would have taken him for ſo poor a ſoldier!

However, I muſt confeſs, that the firmneſs of the Counteſs, did even aſtoniſh me.—I was really ſurprized at the reſolution with which ſhe withſtood for a whole evening, your vows, your proteſtations, and moſt earneſt inſtances. For my part, I own, that I never beheld your addreſs and manners ſo engaging; and ſhe herſelf acknowledged to me ſince, that ſhe never found you ſo formidable before. But, I may venture to anſwer for her now, ſince her courage flinched not, on ſo perilous an occaſion. My reflections carry me farther. The eaſe with which ſhe ſupported her irony throughout, has almoſt brought me to ſuſpect, that her heart has been but ſlightly grazed: had ſhe been really wounded, ſhe would not probably, have preſerved ſo very cavalier an air.

In ſhort, I have amuſed myſelf this morning, with a whimſical thought; that it would be ridiculous enough, if while we are diverting ourſelves with your pains, you ſhould diſcover that your tender Adelaide had conceived but a middling degree of liking for you. What a ſtroke to your vanity!—Though there are yielding fair enough to repair the loſs.—How often will your pique cry out, "What is the heart of woman! Define the jilting compoſition who can."

But after all, let me aſſure you that I have ſome compaſſion for you, and if I ſhould find this matter having too deep an effect upon your mind, I cannot ſay what I may do to mitigate your misfortune. But I know your philoſophy. The firſt tranſports of reſentment over, you will ſoon perceive that the beſt card you have to play in this deſperate game, is to reſtrain your paſſion within the common bounds of friendſhip; which is a condition that we now moſt generouſly tender you. What a happy compoſition is here, when your diſmiſſal might have been abſolute! However, do not plume yourſelf too highly, upon this advantage.—You might not have received ſuch quarter, if we had any farther danger to apprehend from you.

Adieu Marquis.—The Counteſs, who is ſitting by my ſide, ſays many kind things of you. She was particularly pleaſed with the complaiſance of your late behaviour toward us. No longer to preſs an argument when two ladies appeared againſt you, was the very pink of courteſy, and politeneſs, truly. Such extreme delicacy muſt ſurely in the end, diſarm their oppoſition, and at length, excite their compaſſion. Hope;—this we have not yet prohibited you.

Poſtſcript, from the Counteſs.

Though it ſhould encourage the moſt flattering hopes in you, Marquis, I cannot reſiſt the temptation of adding a few lines at the bottom of my friend's letter. I have not read it, but ſuſpect that I may be the ſubject of her epiſtle. I have a mind to give it you under my hand, that we ſhall paſs this day alone together. I would acquaint

quaint you alſo, that though I have but a ſlight regard for you, at preſent, I ſhall every day, endeavour to render it leſs. However, if you have courage enough left, to break in upon our tête a tête party, I give you fair warning, that your danger will be great; for they flatter me that I am infinitely handſomer to-day than you ever yet ſaw me; and I can aſſure you that I never in my life found ſo ſtrong a diſpoſition in myſelf, to uſe you abominably, as at this preſent writing.

In the mean time, Adieu

LETTER XXXIV.

THIS buſineſs begins now, to be rather ſerious Marquis.—I inſiſt upon an explanation Do you ſpeak ingenuouſly in your letter, by hinting that you imagine I have been actuated in this affair, through jealouſy only: and that I have endeavoured to interrupt your commerce with the Counteſs, merely to take ſome private advantage of the rupture?—You have either a very bad heart or a moſt excellent head. The firſt, if you can poſſibly think me capable of ſuch a double dealing; and the latter, if you have but urged this charge, to create ſuſpicion in my friend.

The alternative is equally injurious to me. The counteſs has taken the matter ſeriouſly, and this embarraſſes me to the laſt degree. You are really too many for us—You know the aſcendency you have over her heart, and could not poſſibly have executed it in a ſurer manner, than by putting on the appearance of indifference. Not to deign an anſwer to my laſt letter, to fail the aſſignation we made you under our hands, to remain three days without ſeeing us; and then to write us ſuch a ſtiff, cold letter! I muſt acknowledge Marquis, that all this is of a conſummate politician,—'tis what is characterered under the common phraſe of *un coup de maitre*.

And accordingly the moſt complete ſucceſs has attended your hopes. The poor Counteſs! though ſhe withſtood your *warmth*, could not hold out againſt your *coldneſs*. The apprenenſion leſt this indifference might be real, has thrown her into the utmoſt inquietude. Come then, you Machiavel in love, come and ſurvey the work you ha

made

made. Come, and wipe off her falling tears.—Come to triumph in your victory, and our defeat.

Gods! what is the moſt ſenſible woman in the world, when love has once taken poſſeſſion of her heart! Why are you not here a witneſs to the upbraidings ſhe breathes out againſt me! For what cauſe, you'll ſay? Why truly, I have had it ſeems in the firſt place, an injurious diffidence of her virtue; and in the ſecond a miſtaken notion of your pretenſions. I firſt ſuppoſed them criminal, and then took it into my head to puniſh you for them. I am ſevere cruel, unjuſt, with many epithets more of the ſame kind, which ſhe has heaped upon me.

What emotion! Well, take my word for it, that this ſhall be the laſt ſtorm I ſhall ever ſuſtain for intermeddling between you; and let me here moſt cordially renounce the confidence you have, each of you honoured me with. We adviſers truly, in ſuch caſes, ſtand a moſt admirable *lay* of it! They ſolely are charged with every thing diſagreeable in the quarrel, and the lovers enjoy the whole pleaſure of the reconciliation.

However, upon reflection, I think myſelf weak to have any manner of reſentment upon this occaſion. You are a couple of children, whoſe waywardneſs ought rather to amuſe me. I ſhould regard you each with a philoſophic eye, and continue ſtill my friendſhip to you both. Come hither then, immediately, and acquaint me if you acquieſce in this reſolve of mine. Come away, and drop the *petty tyrant*, for the preſent. Let us make peace, and frame a triple alliance together. My poor dear infants! One of them has ſuch innocent views, and the other ſo ſecure in virtue, that to keep them any longer aſunder, would be a *cruelty* founded on *injuſtice*.

LET-

LETTER XXXV.

I See plainly Marquis, that the only way to preſerve terms with women, even of the beſt underſtanding and virtue, is never to interfere in their love affairs. I have taken my reſolution; and for the time to come, ſhall never mention your name to the Counteſs, unleſs ſhe wreſts it from me—I hate altercation.—However, this reſolve ſhall not in the leaſt affect my ſentiments toward you, any more than the friendſhip I ſhall ever preſerve for her. But though I remain her ally, I ſhall make it no ſcruple to hold on my commerce with you, in the ſame free manner as uſual; and ſhall continue, ſince you preſs it, to give you my opinions, upon every circumſtance of life, you ſhall propoſe to me: but upon this condition be it; that I may not be denied the liberty of laughing ſometimes, at your expence.

However, this privilege I cannot make uſe of at preſent; for if the Counteſs adheres to her reſolution, which is not to ſee you alone. I do not perceive that your affairs are likely to afford me much variety. She perfectly remembers what I uſed lately to tell her: ſhe knows her heart, and has reaſon to fear it. She muſt be a very imprudent woman indeed, who confides in her own forces, and dares expoſe herſelf without apprehenſion to the ſolicitations of a man ſhe likes. Nothing is ſo dangerous as the preſence, as the approach of an object beloved. The emotion that animates, the warmth with which the intire perſon is as it were kindled up, awake the ſenſes, inflame the mind, and excite deſires. I ſaid to the Counteſs

on

one day, that woman may be compared to an harpſichord, which tho' ever ſo well tuned, emits no ſound, 'till the maſters hand begins to operate. 'Touch but the keys, and the tones reſpond Finiſh the parallel, and deduce your conſequences.

But after all, what have you to complain of, my metaphyſical friend? *To behold the Counteſs, to hold tender converſe with her, to liſten to the ſoft melody of her voice, to render her little aſſiduities* (b); to ſpin the thread of ſentiment to a hair and to edify from her ſublime lectures upon virtue; do not theſe, Marquis, conſtitute your ſupreme felicity? Quit, quit to earthly ſouls, thoſe groveling deſires, which begin now to appear too plainly in you. To conſider you in your preſent ſtate, one would imagine that I was not much miſtaken, when I hinted, that even the moſt refined paſſion, was but a more delicate effect of the ſenſes. Your own experience has compelled you at length, into my ſentiments. I am not ſorry for it. I would have you mortified for your incredulity. Adieu.

P. S. The Chevalier, your old rival, has reſented the diſdain of the Counteſs, by throwing himſelf at the feet of the Marchioneſs, her couſin. This choice is a rare encomium on his taſte. But they were formed for one another. I ſhall be curious enough to know how far this hopeful paſſion may be able to carry them.

(b) See Letter ix. firſt paragraph, the *Italics*

LETTER XXXVI.

YOU imagine, Marquis, that I do not perceive all the irony of thoſe compliments you pretend to make me, on my *feigned* reconciliation, as I fancy you ſuppoſe it, with the Counteſs. But in reality, we had never fallen out. She ſoon made an apology for ſome haſty reflections, imputed them all to love, and intreated me to continue till, my friendly counſels to her.

" But my good lady, what end will all my aſſiſtance anſwer, except to prepare a farther triumph for our antagoniſt! My opinion, in this *council of war*, is for quitting the field: for whatever confidence you may place in your own ſtrength, flight only, can inſure your ſafety."

She imagines truly, that ſhe has ſhewn an high inſtance of effort, in the laſt converſation ſhe held with you. But all women ſpeak to their lovers, after the ſame manner.—" I reſt ſatisfied with your heart, they cry; your ſentiments and eſteem are all the aim of my ambition. There are women, I am afraid, indelicate enough to accept moſt willingly, what I refuſe. For my part. I ſhall never envy them their prize." And ſo forth.

Take care Marquis, how you reject theſe refined no ions, openly: To ſeem to ſuſpect their ſincerity upon ſuch occaſions, would be more than unpolite, it would be indiſcreet. You ſhould applaud and encourage their error, if you would profit of it. They would appear delicate, and inſenſible to every other pitfall but thoſe of ſentiment and intellect only. This is their ſyſtem;—this their very ſoul. Some certainly there

there are, who impoſe upon themſelves in theſe opinions, but in truth, the generality of them only endeavour to impoſe upon you.

But whatever may be the reaſon for equivocating upon theſe occaſions, is it not a very happy thing, that they take the trouble of deceiving you after this manner? What obligations ſhould you not acknowledge to them? They give a value by this means, to the ſlighteſt favours, which without this artifice, would bear no price. You ſhould admire our addreſs.—By pretending an indifference, toward what you call the pleaſures of love,—in carrying the affection ſo far, as even to declare an averſion to them, we augment the merit of thoſe ſacrifices we are ſuppoſed to make you. We thus render you grateful, for the very obligations we are ourſelves equally indebted to you for; and exact a tribute even from our conquerors. And ſince it has been decreed from the firſt, that we ſhould ſtill impoſe upon you, what acknowledgments do you owe us, for chuſing the moſt agreeable manner of doing ſo? We but *cheat* you to your *gain*; and multiply difficulties, only to increaſe your triumph. Anxieties and cares are but the purchaſe of your pleaſures. How flattering to your vanity, a pretence to boaſt, "This fair one, ſo delicate of ſentiment, ſo cold to all impreſſions of ſenſe; ſo nice, ſo jealous of her fame, now ſacrifices to me her repugnance, her fears, and her pride. My merit, my perſonal accompliſhments, my addreſs, have won a fortreſs, impregnable to all other aſſailants. *Io triumphe! Io Pæan!* What victory! What glory!"

But if women on their part acted ingenuouſly; were they as unguarded in declaring their ſenti-

ments, as you are aſſiduous in penetrating them you could not poſſibly make ſuch a vain boaſting to yourſelves. What flattering pleaſures would be at once deſtroyed! You ought never, therefore, to impute this reſerve to them as a fault, from whence you reap ſuch happy advantages. Feign rather to be impoſed upon, nay aſſiſt in the deceit yourſelves: It will but heighten and refine your pleaſures.

If the Counteſs ſhould happen to intercept this letter! what reproaches, what upbraidings ſhould I again ſuſtain

Adieu.

LET

LETTER XXXVII.

I Know well enough, that a man of your rank, eſpecially a young officer, is frequently tempted into bad company; and conſequently, may ſometimes be *arreſted in his courſe*, by ſome of thoſe *ſirens* you hint at in your letter (c). However, notwithſtanding ſuch excuſe, you have not gueſſed amiſs; for I ſhould certainly have given you a ſevere lecture upon this occaſion, if I was not perſuaded, that in the preſent ſituation of your heart, ſuch *Circe's* cannot have magic enough to detain you long in chains, from the ſole object of your conſtancy. (d)

But the Counteſs reſents it, you tell me; and I am not at all ſurprized at her jealouſy; as it but confirms my general opinion of your *metaphyſical* females. You may judge from hence, the ſincerity of their profeſſions. Their reſentment is of a ſingular nature truly!—For after all, what do theſe low-bred mixens rob them of? They have not the leaſt idea of *ſentiment*; and the Counteſs, to be ſure, is nothing elſe from top to toe.

Women are ſtrangely inconſiſtent with themſelves! They affect to deſpiſe theſe *mock heroines*, but betray a certain fear at the ſame time, that riſes above contempt. (e). And in reality, have

(c) The Opera girls.

(d) *Circe* was a ſorcereſs, who detained *Ulyſſes* in his courſe on his return to *Penelope*

" { } View them with ſcornful, yet with jealous eyes,"
POPE.

they

they not reaſon to fear them Are you not better pleaſed with the familiarity of their converſe, than with the company of women in higher life; where attention, reſpect, and ſtrict decorum muſt be obſerved? With the firſt, men are perfectly at their eaſe; they feel themſelves in their natural ſtate of freedom: with the latter, conſtrained, circumſpect, and rehearſing as it were a part, they never chuſe to perform. From the characters I have had of ſome of theſe *familiars*, I imagine them very capable of rendering a man truant in ſome particulars, even to the woman he loves beſt in the world; but then this infidelity, if one may give it ſo harſh a name, is ſeldom carried farther by a man of ſenſe. They may excite a tranſient deſire, but are incapable to fix a permanent paſſion.

Theſe *dramatis perſonæ* might indeed be dangerous ſociety, had they either in their wit or manners, a fund ſufficient to entertain you in the progreſs, as much as they do on the commencement of their acquaintance. A little common-place chat readineſs of addreſs, and ſuperficial breeding, take you in at firſt. Ye have not the leaſt delicacy! the freedom of their converſation, the livelineſs of their manners, even the irregularity of their conduct, bewitch ye for the time; a giddy, thoughtleſs tranſport, poſſeſſes itſelf of your ſenſes; and thus ye dream whole hours away, as minutes.

But happily for you, they have ſeldom ſubſtance enough to ſupport a material part: they generally want education and improvement, and conſequently ſoon run the courſe of their narrow circle. The ſame ſtories, the ſame conceits and the ſame mimickries, recur again; and one ſeldom

dom laughs at the ſame jeſt twice, when ſome eſteem for the perſon does not ſupport the humour.

The Counteſs then, may be perfectly eaſy with regard to theſe galantries. I know you well enough, to be anſwerable for it, that ſuch miſtreſſes can never be able to rival her. But, there are certain ſort of women, that may be truly dangerous to you, namely, your ladies of clandeſtine galantry. Theſe are a kind of equivocal claſs in life, who hold a middle rank between women of character, and thoſe I have been ſpeaking of. They aſſociate with the former, and differ from the latter, only in appearances. More free than fond, they impoſe upon your ſex, by lending to ſentiments the leaſt refined, a certain air of paſſion, which is miſtaken for love. They have the art of ſtamping an impreſſion of tenderneſs, upon the vulgar appetite for pleaſure. They would make you believe, that it is from choice, upon a thorough conviction of your extraordinary merits, they ſurrender. If you are not aware of their true character, you will find it difficult to diſtinguiſh the motives of their kindneſs, from a real ſenſibility of heart; and be apt to miſtake for an exceſs of paſſion, what is only a fever of the ſenſes. You flatter yourſelf that you are accepted as a lover, when you are but invited as a galant.

Theſe are the ſort of women I ſhould moſt ſuſpect, for ſupplanting the Counteſs. The *financier*'s (f) widow, who has been lately introduced into her parties - is of this character. I perceiv-

(f) A receiver general of the French revenues:

ed

ed it was the firſt evening we pent together; and in your former letter, you hi it at ſome lures ſhe let drop before you. Had not the Counteſs reaſon to be alarmed at theſe advances? Your paſſion for this latter, I do really believe at preſent, to be ſtrong enough to induce you to ſacrifice every conſideration to it. But how long may it continue ſo? The lady we are ſpeaking of, is handſome, has gaiety and ſpirit, and but juſt entered into that ſtage of life, when women willingly undertake the charge of young men, introduce them into the world, and teach them their firſt leſſons of gallantry.

That tender and attentive air, with which ſhe receives and accoſts you, may have its effect. Be on your guard: remember I give you warning. Men unawares, attach themſelves to ſuch women, even while they are deſpiſing them; and they have the art, often to make ye do more ſilly things, than any other ſort of women in the world.

Adieu.

LET

LETTER XXXVIII.

I AM impatient to acquaint you Marquis, that I have been juſt now ſupporting an argument, againſt Monſieur *de la Bruyere*. Don't you admire at my aſſurance? It is true for all that. He ſaid that *Corneille* has drawn the characters of mankind, as they ought to be, and *Racine* ſuch as they really are. I maintained the direct contrary opinion. We had a very critical audience at this diſpute; and I carried the queſtion, upon a poll. This perhaps, I was not a little vain of. But the *pro* and *con* would take up too much of my letter. —Call to ſee me ſoon, and I may entertain you perhaps, with both ſides of the argument. Every one has their own manner of painting things, and I have mine among the reſt. I ſketch out women juſt as I found them, and am ſorry I cannot repreſent them as they would pretend to be. But to your letter.

The kind of languor that oppreſſes you, does not ſurprize me. The indiſpoſition of the Marchioneſs, has deprived you of the opportunity of ſeeing her couſin; your heart has continued in the ſame ſituation for three intire days: 'tis quite natural for ſuch a circumſtance to produce ſuch an effect. Neither does the coolneſs you are ſometimes ſuſceptible of, toward the Counteſs, ſeem more extraordinary to me than the former. In the fondeſt paſſions one is ſenſible, at times, of certain weary moments, which ſurprize even the perſons themſelves who are affected with them. Love has its *ſyncope's* (g), as well as other

(g) A faintneſs or intermiſſion of pulſe.

ther *diſeaſes*. Whether the eart, fatigued with its own emotions, ſteals a refr ſhing nap; or that its attention is not ſteady enough for contemplating always the ſame object; at ſometimes experiences its intervals of indifference, without being able in the leaſt, to account for them. The ſtronger the *guſt*, the profounder the *calm*: and this ſuſpenſion, believe me, is often more fatal to love, than the very ſtorm and tempeſt itſelf. This paſſion is extinguiſhed by too ſtrong, or too uniform a reſiſtance. The generality of women have only one way of reſiſting: a woman of ſenſe and cleverneſs does more:—ſhe varies her mode of defence; and this is the very ſublime of the art.

But the Counteſs, it ſeems, prefers the duties of friendſhip, to thoſe of love; and this is a new reaſon for your coldneſs toward her. Love is a jealous and tyranical ſentiment, which is never ſatisfied, unleſs its object facrifices to it every taſte, every devoir, every paſſion. You have done nothing for it yet, while there remains ſtill any thing more to be done. Prefer your duty, friendſhip, or any other ſocial tye, but for an inſtant—it reſents——it retaliates.

The forced compliments you pay to the *financiere*, are an inſtance of this unreaſonable pique. I could wiſh however, that you had not carried it ſo far as to attend her on her laſt viſit to the Counteſs. The time you ſtaid with her there, the pleaſure you appeared to ſhew in entertaining her, the queſtions ſhe propoſed to you, with regard to the ſituation of your heart—theſe things I ſay, prove the truth of my ſentiments to you on this head in my laſt letter.

You may pretend if you pleaſe, that all his flirting has but the more confirmed your paſſion for

for the Counteſs; but your embarraſſment, when ſhe aſked you the next day, how long you had ſtaid with the widow, when you eſcorted her home; the evaſive anſwer you gave, and the pains you took to dispel her ſlighteſt doubts, ſufficiently convince me that you are more guilty than you would acknowledge or even than you really imagine yourſelf to be.

The Counteſs herſelf takes the affair in this light; for did you not obſerve the affectation with which ſhe endeavoured to pique your love by commending your old rival, the Chevalier? I may venture to promiſe for it, that you will not haſtily fall back again into that letargy you ſo lately complained of. Jealouſy is preparing employment ſufficient to keep you awake.

But how can you make ſo light of the poor Marchioneſs's misfortune! You will ſoon find, that the ſmall-pox has not altered her face alone: her temper will partake of the change, believe me, as ſoon as the glaſs informs her how great it is. How much I pity her! But, pity her whole ſex, at the ſame time! With what cordiality will ſhe hate, and tare them to pieces! Your Counteſs is at preſent, her deareſt friend.——How long will ſhe continue ſo, think you? She is really, an extreme pretty woman, and has a complexion ſo apt to make others look like gypſies: what envious breaches do I not foreſee!

I forgot to commence a ſerious quarrel with You ſir, for a piece of your ill behaviour to me. you have had the indiſcretion to ſhew moſt of my late letters, to Monſieur *de la Rochefaucault*, I ſhall ceaſe writing to you, if I find you cannot keep a ſecret. I ſpeak my ſentiments freely enough before him, in converſation; but muſt

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be a good deal vainer than I am, who can flatter themſelves that their writings may be able to ſtand the criticiſm of ſuch a reader

Farewel.

LETTER XXXIX.

THE redneſs, that the ſmall-pox has left upon the charms of the unfortunate Marchioneſs, mortifies her extremely. I am not ſurprized at her purpoſe of retiring to the country, for ſome time: ſhe is not really, in a fit condition to appear abroad. If this humbling accident had not happened, the Chevalier might not perhaps have found the ſiege ſo eaſy to carry, as it is probable he had at firſt imagined. May not this ſerve to prove, that women's virtue generally depends upon circumſtances, and diminiſhes always with their pride? (h)

But I am afraid of this example for the Counteſs. Nothing is more dangerous for a woman, than the frailty of her friend. Love, in itſelf already too alluring, abtains new vigour by contagion, if you'll allow me the expreſſion. It is not from our hearts alone, it draws it forces: recruits

(h) Here it may be obſerved, that Ninon's imagination is not at all phlegmatic A ſlight matter ſerves her for proof. In this paſſage ſhe ſuppoſes an event, and then reaſons upon it, as t ct

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are raiſed from many of the foreign objects that ſurround us. Guilty perſons think it ſome ſcreening of themſelves, to lead others into the ſame ſnare. I am therefo e, not at all ſurprized at the many kind things the Marchioneſs has lately ſaid to her couſin, in your favour. Hitherto, they have both of them, conducted themſelves upon the ſame principles (a) What confuſion then, muſt it be to her, if the Counteſs alone, ſhould have reaped the benefit of them?

The Marchioneſs has beſides, a further reaſon at preſent, more than another woman might have had, to contribute toward the defeat of her friend. She has loſt her beauty, and may therefore be obliged, in order to preſerve her lover, to make ſome condeſcenſions, more than were requiſite in her former ſhould Can ſhe ſuffer, think you, that another ſhould retain theirs, at a leſs expence? 'This would be ſubmitting to a mortifying ſuperiority: I am therefore convinced that ſhe would run any length, to relax the moral of your charming *Adelaide*. Should ſhe ſucceed, in good truth I tremble at the unluckineſs of circumſtances! To have been once, as handſome as our friend—to ceaſe to be ſo any longer, our rival's charms each day improving—yet ſtill to be condemned to appear in contraſt with her! Oh ſir it is a trial, beyond our wiſdom's ſtrength! it baffles all philoſophy Among women, friendſhip cancels, or commences rivalſhips. I mean the conteſt for beauty only—it would be too much to add that of paſſior alſo.

(a) Sea the converſation of the Counteſs, with Monſcur de la Sablierie, Letter XXXI.

I fore-

I foreſee it with concern, but I muſt predict it to you. Whatever precautions the Counteſs may uſe, to ſooth the misfortune of the Marchioneſs, ſhe will make but an ungrateful return for. I don't know how it is, but every thing a pretty woman ſays upon ſuch an occaſion, to one who never was, or is no longer handſome, carries with it a certain air of compaſſion, which cancels all her kindneſs, and mortifies the perſon ſhe would conſole. The more pains ſhe takes to appear inſenſible of her ſuperiority over the unfortunate object, the more ſhe confirms it; and ſeems to confeſs a *ſubaltern merit* in the other, thro' charity, rather than the ſpontaneous will, with which we uſually acknowledge *inferior* charms. (b).

In truth Marquis, women ſeldom deceive each other by the mutual compliment they pay. All of them know perfectly well, what rate to ſet upon civilities of this ſort: ſo that as they ſpeak without ſincerity, they liſten without gratitude: and ſhould the female panegyriſt be of the beſt faith in the world, in other particulars, the fair one whoſe beauty is praiſed, in order to judge of her veracity, attends leſs to her words, than her features. Is ſhe homely? we believe, and love the flatterer. Near our own rank of beauty? we receive the compliment coolly, and diſdain her. But, if handſomer—we hate her worſe, even than we did before. In ſhort, believe me, that while the pre-eminence of charms remains in contempt between two females, no perfect amity can ever be eſtabliſhed. Can two merchants,

(b) Damn with *faint* praiſe, commend with civil *leer*. POPE.

who

who have the ſame goods lying on hands, enter into a ſtrict friendſhip together?

For want of this hint, the real cauſe of the want of cordiality among women, has ſeldom been inveſtigated. Thoſe who appear the moſt fondly connected, often break for the ſmalleſt matter. Was it this trifle, think you, that occaſioned the breach? It was only the pretext. We conceal the true motives of our actions, when the diſcovery may be to our advantage: we muſt never admit that the mortification, ariſing from our friend's beauty, had eſtranged us from her: this would be to betray our jealouſy, our envy; and we would rather be deemed unjuſt, than yield our rival ſo high a triumph. Whenever two pretty women are ſo lucky, to meet with the leaſt plauſible occaſion, of *ridding themſelves* of each other, they lay hold of it with ſo much eagerneſs, and hate one another ſo cordially, that one may eaſily judge what ſort of an affection had ſubſiſted between them before.

Well Marquis, do I ſpeak my mind freely enough to you? You ſee how far my ſincerity carries me. I endeavoured to give you juſt notions of every thing, and am not ſparing even of my own expence; for I am certainly, not more exempt than another, from the failings I deſcribe. But as I truſt, that all I have ſaid will remain a ſecret between us, I am not afraid of bringing myſelf into a ſcrape with my ſex, who would doubtleſs have great reaſon to reſent my frankneſs. The Counteſs however is above ſuch diſguiſes, and honeſtly confeſſes to the truth of my propoſitions.

How few women are there of this ingenuous nature?

Adieu.

LETTER.

LETER XL.

THE example of the Marchioneſs then, has had no effect yet, upon the heart of her friend? It ſeems on the contrary, that the Counteſs keeps rather more on her guard againſt you; and has reſented ſome ſlight freedoms you have lately indulged yourſelf in with her.

I was in hopes that on this occaſion, ſhe would have reminded you of the former declarations of deference and diſintereſtedneſs you made on the firſt overtures of your paſſion. This is the uſual way in ſuch caſes. But what is very ſingular in this affair, is, that the ſame earneſtneſs, which a woman looks upon as w nt f reſpect, on the commencement of an amour, ſhall paſs with her for a proof of love and eſteem, after the completion of it. Liſten to wives and miſtreſſes, attend to their repining murmurs, againſt careleſs huſbands and lukewarm lovers: you'll find their complaints generally to be, that they have *loſt their eſteem*; and they impute their coldneſs to this alone. But among ourſelves, what they imagine to be tokens of reſpect and eſteem, are they not the very reverſe of ſuch ſentiments?

I had told you long ago, that women, would they honeſtly confeſs, make love, to conſiſt in warm deſire, even more than men do. Obſerve a miſtreſs on the commencement of her paſſion and love is then an *idea*, purely metaphyſical; in which the ſenſes have a great manner of concern. Like the ſtoic philoſophers, who in the midſt of torments, would not confeſs their pain ſhe remains ſome ti ne a martyr to her own ſyſtem: 'till

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at length, love becomes triumphant, and nature will prevail.

After this, the lover would have much buſineſs truly, to play back her metaphyſical theory upon her. "That this refined paſſion exiſts ſolely in ſublime conceit, and ſpiritual intercourſe: that it would be degrading its abſtract and celeſtial nature, to impure it with any thing merely human or material," &c.

He may boaſt his ſuperſtitious reverence and devotion—in vain.—The preaching prieſt will never be admitted to ſacrifice at our altars, believe me. His *reſpect* would be taken for affront, his *delicacy* for deriſion, and his *fine-ſpun harangues* for diſingenuous evaſions. All the credit he could expect, would be, that ſhe may, perhaps, ſuppoſe his having had leſs delicate engagements with ſome other fair one, might have reduced him to the ſad neceſſity of parading theſe chimera's before his *miſtreſs—in name only*. And what is admirable upon ſuch occaſions, is, that the very apology they ſupply him with, proceeds from the ſame principle.

I ſee what deference you have for my commands: you have not only expoſed my letters to Monſieur de la Rochefaucault, but you read them in public company. It is true that the partial opinion of my friends upon them, makes me ſome amends for your indiſcretion; and in truth I think my beſt way is to proceed without reſerve, as before. But at laſt, I hope you will have proper caution whenever I ſay any thing, in which the honour of the Counteſs is concerned. Without this condition, you muſt expect no more letters from

NINON.

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LETTER XLI.

NO Marquis, ſay what you will, I cannot forgive you that extreme impatience, with which you preſs, for what you ſtile your ſupreme felicity. Ignorant as you are, will you never be perſuaded, that when you are ſecured of a woman's heart, it ſhould be your chief pleaſure to enjoy her defeat for ſome time, before you compleat it? You are a perfect novice, if you do not know, that of all pleaſures, thoſe of love require to be huſbanded with the greateſt œconomy. Were I a man, and had the fortune to win a heart, I mean ſuch a one as the Counteſs's, with what parſimony would I uſe my advantage! How many gradations would I oblige myſelf to paſs through, ſucceſſively and ſlowly! How many delicate pleaſures, unknown to the generality of men, would I, as it were, create to myſelf! like the miſer; I would inceſſantly contemplate my treaſure, rejoice in the richneſs of it, be conſcious that it conſtituted my higheſt felicity, place my whole ſcheme of happineſs in the poſſeſſion of it, in looking upon it as my own peculiar property, in being the abſolute diſpoſer of it, and yet, ſtrengthen myſelf in the reſolution, not to leſſen it by uſe! What tranſport to read in the eyes of a lovely woman, the dominion you have over her, to obſerve in all her actions relative to you, a ſtill increaſing tenderneſs; to perceive her voice aſſume a ſofter tone whene'er ſhe ſpeaks of, or to you; to view her bluſhes, even upon a compliment of courſe, and to triumph in her confuſion upon any particular addreſs!

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Can there be a ſituation on earth, more flattering than that of a lover, conſcious of a reciprocal flame? And what ſurer proof can he require, than inſtances like theſe? How charming to be expected with an impatience, that her whole prudence cannot conceal; to be received with a welcome, which charms the more, by the endeavours ſhe makes in part, to hide her tranſport! She has dreſſed herſelf in your t ſte, takes the very mien, the accent; the whole air of perſon, that is known to be moſt agreeable to you. Before ſhe uſed to adorn herſelf, to charm your ſex in general. At preſent, her toilette is ſpread for you alone. For you theſe jewels, this ribbon, that bracelet, are p t on. You are the ſole object of her who attire. You are become her ſecond ſelf. She loves you over again in her own image.

Can there, even in love, be a more enchanting ſcene, than the faint reluctance of a yielding fair, ſupplicating you not to take advantage of her weakneſs, reduced to owe her very virtue to you? In a word, can any thing be more bewitching, than a voice faltering with emotion, than thoſe denials, for which ſhe ſeems almoſt to reproach herſelf, and ſoftens the rigour of by the moſt tender regards, even before they are complained of?

How can you ſuffer ſuch inchantment to be diſſolved? For my part I cannot conceive it: and yet, when your haſty wiſhes ſhall be accompliſhed, theſe truly delicate pleaſures diminiſh in proportion to th facility of your victory. It remained in your power to prolong, to augment them, in affording yourſelf leiſure to contemplate, and enjoy the refined and ſuperior ſweetneſs of them.

But ye are never ſatisfied, 'tn the poſſeſſion is abſolute, eaſy and uninterrupted; ;nd yet, are af

terwards surprised, to find your hearts affected with indifference, coldness and inconstancy. Have you not done every thing in your power, to cloy yourself with the desired object? How often have I told you, that love seldom dies of *hunger*, but frequently of *satiety*?

At some other time, I shall make you a confident of my amour with *de Villarceaux*; and you may thence instruct yourself, after what manner one should conduct a passion to make it lasting. You may then be able to judge whether I understand the human heart, and have a true taste for the refinements of pleasure. You will learn from my experience, that an œconomy of our passions, is perhaps the only *metaphysics* in love. You will, in fine, perceive from hence, how little consideration you have for your choicest interests, in your present impatient conduct toward the Countess.

But, to baffle all you schemes, I shall be frequent in my visits and counsels to her. Now do not put on *a long face*, and reproach me with playing a double part between ye; for in reality, according to my notions, I act equally for the advantage of both parties.

Farewel.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

I Pity you, Marquis! Not I, truly: You never govern yourſelf by my counſels, and I am not ſorry to ſee you ſuffer for it ſometimes. You thought it was now high time to advance your familiarities with the Counteſs. The unreſerved way ſhe ſpeaks of love, that eaſineſs of her manners, the ready forgiveneſs of your many indiſcretions, the frankneſs of her rallying the *Platoniſts*——all thoſe I ſay, had led you into a preſumption, that the ſeverity of her morals might have been conſideral y abated, of late. But experience has, ſhew you the ignorance of your error; and all this *external* freedom, you will find to be only an alluring and political artifice. —But then—to abuſe your ſimple hearted, plain dealing folk, after ſuch a manner 'Tis moſt ungenerous treatment, truly! and merits all the reſentment that can poſſibly be ſhewn, upon ſo juſtifiable an occaſion!

Now, ſhall I ſpeak to you with my uſual ingemuouſneſs? You are fallen into a miſtake, which is but too common with your ſex. They rarely judge of us, but from outward appearances: they imagine, that every woman who does not hold her virtue co ſtantly in armour, may become an eaſier conqueſt, than a prude: nor does even experience convince them of their error By which means, they expoſe themſelves often to ſevere repulſes, which are therefore the more mo tifying, as the leaſt expected from that quarter.

Their *reprize* then, is to acc ſe us of jilting and caprice. Ye all cry out, with one voice,

'Why ſuch equivocal proceedings? If a woman is determined to remain inexorable, why ſhould ſhe cruelly amuſe the hopes of her lover? Should there not be a conformity between your ſentiments and actions? In fine, is it not ungenerous to ſuffer you to love us ſtill, while you diſpenſe with yourſelves for a return? Is not this a diſingenuous——nay, a diſhoneſt conduct? Is not this to make a mock of love and ſentiment?" &c.

No, gentlemen——it is only making a *mock* of your vanity.—You doubtleſs, bring a heavy charge againſt us; but after all, it is we in reality, who are the moſt equivocated with: for, do you mention ſe only to ennoble a paſſion which is the leaſt *ſen mental* of any?

Beſides, is it not yourſelves who lay us under the neceſſity of playing this game? If a woman has even the ſlighteſt knowledge of your ſex, ſhe muſt know that the ſtrongeſt—the only tye over your affections, is hope ſhe ought ſurely then, to ſupply conſtant food to your expectations. Should her deportment but once aſſume an invincible air—No more hope—No more lover.—— What a forlorn ſtate! what an humble condition! For let a woman's virtue be ever ſo ſevere, her heart is never thereby rendered leſs ſenſible to the deſire of pleaſing; nor does her glory conſiſt leſs in attracting your homage and adorations.—But, well knowing that thoſe from whom they expect them, tender their devoirs from motives that mortify their pride; and not being able to rectify this *vulgar defect*, they employ their whole art in taking a ſafe advantage of it; and ſtill preſerve their admirers, by ſuffering thoſe hopes to ſubſiſt, which they never mean to fulfil.

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If they happen to have addreſs, they ſucceed in their ſcheme; and if a woman has the leaſt knowledge of her true intereſts, ſhe will revolve to herſelf what the Counteſs ſaid to me, in our laſt converſation together. "I know well what ſort of value to ſet upon the *I love you* of men, and thoroughly comprehend the full ſcope of their proteſtations. It is therefore my own fault, if I ſuffer myſelf to be impoſed upon by them. And indeed, after one has comprehended their deſign, our pride alone, one ſhould fancy, might be ſufficient to diſconcert their views. Reſentment, when their behaviour provokes it, is not the beſt ſhield we can take up againſt them. Whoever is reduced to call in forei and ſummon anger to their aſſiſtance, betrays the poverty of their own reſources. A fine irony, a ſmart raillery, or a mortifying ſlight, are more effectual diſcouragements Let there be no quarrels, and there will be no occaſion for reconciliations; which always gain ſome ground What advantages will not ſuch conduct deprive them of!

"Prudes, indeed, take quite another method. Make but the leaſt attack upon them, and they are up in arms, at once; as if the credit of their chaſtity was to riſe, in proportion to the height of their reſentment. But, what is the effect of ſo much ſtarchneſs? *Men of the world* are apt to ſay, I might not have ſuſtained this repulſe, had I not ill-timed my attack. It is my indiſcretion and not my aſſu ance, that is rebuked. At another conjecture the crime of to-day, might perhaps be the merit of to-morrow. Her preſent reſentment is a hint, to wa h a more *critical minute*, when I may probably obtain more indulgence, and diſarm her pride. I muſt appeaſe he wrath, and the ſureſt way of n aking her forg t

his offence, is, in the inſtant of forgiveneſs, to offend again. This I ſay may be their reaſoning with theſe *outrageouſly virtuous*; but in my manner of treating ſuch impertinence, they can never make uſe of this method of argument. (a)

"The Marquis, for example, has ſometimes betrayed his *reſpectful* intentions, by his eyes. I uſed but one method, upon theſe occaſions;——I have ſeemed to take no notice of it, and inſenſibly gave a turn to the converſation, which drew his attention upon other objects. This addreſs ſerved me extremely well, 'till the laſt time we were together; and then, indeed, there was no farther diſſembling with him. He would have *honoured* me with ſome freedom, which however I quickly put a ſtop to, but without anger. I thought it better to defend myſelf by reaſon than by paſſion. I appeared rather mortified, than provoked; and I am certain, that my concern affected him more, than the higheſt reſentment could have done. He retired on the inſtant with a deſponding air.—But now, to ſee what ſtuff the heart is made of! In the firſt moments I feared I had loſt him for ever—I almoſt repented me of my cruelty—I thought I had carried my politics too far. But a little reflection re-aſſumed me again. Has coyneſs ever created inconſtancy?"

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(a) A friend of mine, reading this paſſage, reſembled prudes to dwarfs in armour, who if the fight was continued for any time, are apt to ſink under the weight of their own accoutrements. And added, that the difference between theſe *virtuoſe's*, and ſuch as the Counteſs, might be compared to charioteer's, who preſerve their ſeat, by ſitting free and eaſy in it. Theſe who fix themſelves, ſtiff, are liable to be thrown out by a jolt.

In ſhort, Marquis we talked upon this ſubject 'till we were both of us out of breath. And, if I can anſwer for woman, I think your Counteſs ſtands upon *firm ground*. You may exclaim aloud againſt her unkindneſs; call her capricious and unjuſt. But no pleaſures of love for her, that are to be purchaſed at the expence of her pride. This is her abſolute reſolve; and ſhe has, believe me, ſtrength ſufficient to ſupport it.

The loſs of your heart would, I really think, be a misfortune ſhe might feel with regret, perhaps her whole life. But on the other hand, the conditions you impoſe on the preſerving it, are a great deal too ſevere. She would compound this buſineſs with you. Sh o fix your *regards* without remitting *tho,* ſhe owes herſelf. This is a project, worthy o her ſpirit; and I hope it may ſucceed better with her, than the one ſhe formed before, to guard her heart from love. We muſt attend the event.

Shall we meet you to-morrow, on our intended viſit to the p de s widow? If you have any thing to ſay to us, you may take this opportunity of making your peace.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

I Never expected it Marquis.—But I find that my good will to ſerve you, is to be paid with reproaches only; and I am, it ſeems, to take ſhare with the Counteſs, of that ill humour her coyneſs has thrown you into. Do you know now, that tho' what you ſay had had any foundation, n thing could have mortified me more, than the ironical tone with which you pretend to compliment me upon my principles of philoſophy.

But your making me reſponſible, for your ſucceſs in this amour, [illegible] me extremely. Have you taken it into your head that my deſign in theſe letters, was to give you lectures on ſeduction? Do you make no difference between teaching you how to pleaſe, and inſtructing you how to *delude?* 'Tis true I explained to you the phyſical cauſe of love, both male and female; but did I ever ſay, that women were therefore, the more eaſily won; Did I ever adviſe you to attack them by the ſenſes; or ſuppoſe them to be void of delicacy or ſentiment? I appeal to my letters—You ſay you have them all—I defy you to produce a ſingle paragraph, to this purpoſe.

While your inexperience and baſhfulneſs ſuffered you to appear in an aukward light before women, I remarked to you the diſadvantages this might ſubject you to, in your progreſs thro' life. I then adviſed you to aſſume a little more ſpirit and confidence, in order to inſpire you by degrees, with that eaſy and liberal addreſs which becomes a gentleman, in polite commerce with women. But, when I found that you carried your preten-

ſions

ſions too far, and were likely to affect the honour of the Counteſs, I confeſs honeſtly, that I took part againſt you. It was very proper I ſhould do ſo: I was then, become her friend.

You may ſee then, how unjuſt your charges are, againſt me; and I really think, that your opinion of her, is as much ſo. You ſpeak of her, as one of an equivocal character; as a woman who is neither determined for nor againſt galantry; and then peremptorily conclude, that ſhe is only a coquette, of an higher claſs than ordinary.

What a judgment have you framed? But one muſt make allowance for the preſent perturbations of your mind. A diſpaſſionate, unprejudiced perſon, might have perceived the Counteſs to be a miſtreſs, full as chaſte as tender;—a woman not profeſſing the *ſhew*, but poſſeſſing the *ſubſtance* of virtue. Finally, an amiable fair, whom honour and prudence have inſpired with the moſt proper conduct to conciliate her love for you, and her duty to herſelf, together.

The difficulty of blending theſe repugnances into one ſyſtem, is not inconſiderable; and this is the ſource of that inequality of behaviour which perplexes you in her.—Imagine to yourſelf, the ſtruggles ſhe muſt ſuſtain, the varying modes of her defence, and the inconſiſtencies, that muſt unavoidably appear in her actions, who would endeavour to preſerve a lover, whom too continued a reſiſtance might deprive her of.

There is no keeping a ſteady conduct with you men.—You are ſo very impatient, that you fly off frequently, upon the ſlighteſt oppoſition. You d honour to our virtue, but abandon us at the ſ me time. And what a diſgrace is this! How

many women have ſacrificed themſelves, to prevent ſuch amortification! But ſince in neither caſe, one is ſure of preſerving the lover, we ought certainly to prefer that method, which may at leaſt intitle us to his affections and eſteem

This is *our* opinion—For the Counteſs and I have diſcuſſed, and agreed this point between us Shew then more equity, Marquis.—Pity, rather than condemn her. If her character had been more remiſs, you would perhaps, have liked it better.—But would you do ſo long? Not you, truly —Adieu —We reckon upon your company this evening, at Madame de la Fayette's, and hope to meet you there, in a more rational humour.

To-morrow, he Abb de Gedoine is to be preſented to me. I am to have a moſt brilliant aſſembly. Will you come But I know how inſipid it muſt be to you, as the Counteſs will not be with me—You would ſay of my apartments, what *Malherbe* has of the gardens of the *Louvre*:

In vain you boaſt your charms your beauties rare!
I ſee them not—*Caliſta* is not there.

LETTE

LETTER XLIV.

A Calm has at length ſucceeded to your ſtorm, Marquis; and I perceive from your letter, that you are at preſent, better pleaſed with the Counteſs, even than you are with yourſelf. What an additional force does reaſon obtain, in paſſing thro' ivory teeth and ruby lips!

Obſerve the different effects of the different conduct of the two couſins. The coyneſs of the one has augmented your eſteem, and confirmed your love: while the kindneſs of the other has rendered the Chevalier faithl . ..ch is the nature of man! and ingratitude the reward of our favours!

This misfortune however, may poſſibly be prevented—And I ſhall upon this occaſion, communicate to you part of a letter, I have lately received from Monſieur *de St. Evremond*. You know the conſtant correſpondence we have always held together.

The young Count de ——— ſome time ago married Mademoiſelle de ——, of whom he had been moſt deſperately enamoured. Soon after, he lamented to me that marriage and poſſeſſion ſhould too generally weaken, nay frequently extinguiſh, the fondeſt the moſt tender paſſion. We differted a good deal upon ſo intereſtng a ſubject; and as I happened to write, the ſame day to *St. Evremond*, I propoſed the *theſis* to him; and I ſend you the anſwer I rec ived in his own manuſcript.

Mon-

Monſieur de St. EVREMOND *to Mademoiſelle de* L'ENCLOS.

" My ſentiments agree perfectly with yours, madam. It is not always, as it is commonly imagined, that either matrimony or enjoyment, of themſelves, diminiſh or deſtroy this paſſion. The little diſcretion with which we huſband our affections; too abſolute, too eaſy, too uninterrupted a poſſeſſion; theſe are the real ſources of thoſe *weanings* and diſguſts, which ariſe ſo frequently in love

" When we ſurrende ourſelves up without reſerve, to all the exceſſes of a paſſion, theſe extraordinary tranſports are apt ſuddenly to ſubſide, to leave a cloyed ſatiety upon the mind, and ſuffer the heart to become ſenſible of a liſtleſs vacancy of ſentiment, and chilline's of affection. In vain do we ſeek out of ourſelves, the cauſes of that calm which ſucceeds our ſtrongeſt emotions. Nor do we ſee that a more equal and laſting pleaſure had been the conſequence of a little moderation.

" Examine cloſely, into the movements of your mind, when you wiſh for any thing, and you will find, that your deſires ariſe ſolely, from a fondneſs for variety. The love of change is the very *diaſtole* of the the heart. (b) Satisfiy our curioſity, and our wiſhes faint away. Whoever,

(b) Its dilatation, or expanſion; which gives a fe circulation of the blood thro' the whole ani aal œconomy.

ver, then, would fix on a husband, or a lover, should still leave them something to desire each day should promise something new or rare, for the morrow. Diversify his pleasures; exhibit in the same object, the quickening spirit of variety, and I will answer for his fidelity and constancy.

" I acknowledge indeed, that marriage, or what is stiled your *defeat*, is in common life, the sepulchre of love: But then, it is less to the lover, than to the fair one who complains of this mortality, that the defeat is to be imputed. She objects to the corruption of the heart, what is but the natural consequence of her mal address, and indiscreet œconomy. as expended at once, what would have maintained a passion for life: She has reserved nothing new to amuse the expectations, the curiosity of her lover. Like a fixed statute, she excites no desires; and her whole *role* he has already by heart.

" But with a woman, *such as I have at present in contemplation*, it is the dawn of a fair summer's day: not the hasty snatch of transient joy, but a stated course of permanent pleasures; ob those disclosings of the heart; those mutual confidences, which charm the soul; those ingenuous confessions, which escape your lips; those transports, which are excited in our breasts, by the consciousness of constituting the whole happiness and merit the entire affection of the persons beloved.

" This day, in a word, is an æra, when a man of refined sentiment, will begin to find out inexhaustible treasures, which 'till then had been modestly concealed from him. The freedom a woman acquires upon such occasions suffers her to

play that wit, that ſenſe, and thoſe talents, which reſtraint and reſerve had kept him a ſtranger to before. Her ſoul begins now to take a *flight*, but ſoaring ſtill under command of the *lure*. (c) Thus time, ſo far from inducing indifference, or diſguſt, but rather multiplies reaſons for increaſing love.

" But then we muſt ſtill ſuppoſe, that this ſame woman ſhall have government enough over her paſſions, to keep her affections ever under command.—For to preſerve a lover, it is not enough—or rather it is too much—to love him to exceſs. She muſt know how to parcel out her fondneſs, by *retail*—not heap it upon him by *wholeſale*. And for this purpoſe, modeſty is perhaps, the moſt ingenious device, that could poſſibly be ever imagined, by the wit and delicacy of mankind. (d)

" But to deliver herſelf up ſo entirely to her paſſion, to annihilate herſelf, as it were, in the preſence of her lover, is the part of a mere novice in the ſcience. This is not *to love*—'tis *to languiſh*—and to ſuffer the paſſion alſo, ſoon to do ſo too.

" I would have a woman conduct herſelf with better œconomy, and addreſs. The greatneſs

(c) A metaphor borrowed from falconry.

(d) This is one, among the many paſſages, interſperſed throughout theſe writings, which afford admirable hints to our ſex. Modeſty is certainly the ſureſt charm, to win or wear a lover; *be he delicate, or be he not*. What has been ſaid of honeſty, may be a rmed of this quality, ano; that it is the *beſt policy*; e en ſuppoſing virtue, character and decency, out of queſtion.

neſs of her fondneſs, does by no means juſtify her. The heart is a fiery courſer, whoſe mettle ſhould be reſtr ined. If you manage not his forces with horſeman hip, his ſpirit will but the ſooner jade him. The ſame lukewarmneſs that you perceive in the lover, after theſe extraordinary tranſports, you will alſo be ſenſible of in yourſelf; and you will both of you, in a ſhort time find yourſelves equally inclined to quit the irrecoverable game. In fine, it requires more genius to love, and to increaſe and prolong the happineſs of loving, than is too generally imagined

" 'Till the moment of the fatal *Yes*, on whatever terms granted, a woman has but little need of artifice, to preſerve her lover Curioſity excites, deſire impels, and hope ſuſtains. But when once ſucceſs has crowned the adventure, ſhe is called upon to uſe as much pains to preſerve her lover, as it coſt him to win her. It requires that the deſire of fixing him ſhould inſpirit her policies; for the heart is like an o town, eaſier to take than keep.

" Beauty is ſufficient to win our love; but to inſure our conſtancy, ſomething more is neceſſary. There muſt be ſenſe, addreſs, cleverneſs, and certain *quickneſs of ſpirit*. But unhappily, when they have once ceded the queſtion, they become too tender, they even prevent our wiſhes. It would be better, for our mutual advantage, were they leſs coy before, and more reſerved after.—I muſt repeat it: there is no way to poſtpone diſguſt, but by leaving the heart at leiſure to form its wiſhes.

" I hear them continually complaining, that our i difference is generally the conſequence of their mpliances; eternally reproaching us with the

times

times when whole ſummer ſuns rolled unp ceived away in their company. Fruitleſs chidin› ! 'Tis upon themſelves, not on us, they ſhou d call, to reſtore that happy and regretted æra. Let them forget the favours they have alread granted, and they will not labour to exceed them. Let them ſuffer us to forget them, and we ſhall exact the leſs. Let them rouſe our affections by new difficulties; let our ſolicitudes revive—in a word, ſuffer our doubts ſtill to require freſh proofs of a paſſion, the certainty of which ſo much abates the alue. Thenceforward, they will have leſs to complain of in us, and more to be ſatisfied with in themſelves.

" I tell it to yo frankly,—the ſcenes would be quite ſhifted, if women would conſtantly bear in mind, that their *role* was always to receive petitions—ours, to ſupplicate and earn new bounties. That made to *grant*, they ought never to *give*. Reſerved even in the exceſs of paſſion, they ſhould not yield themſelves up to it, without controul. Leave the lover always ſomething farther to deſire, and he will be obſequious to obtain it. Full compliances render the moſt bewitching charms of none effect, and ſoon diſguſt the very perſon who exacts them. This is not a ſpectulative *problem*, but a truth of confirmed experience.

" Poſſeſſion places all women on a level. The homely and the fair, after their conqueſt, have no difference between them, except the art of preſerving ſtill our hearts. But what is commonly the caſe ? A woman thinks ſhe has nothing farther to do, than to be ſubmiſſive, fond, mild, even tempered, and faithful. So far indeed, ſh judges right, that theſe qualities ſhould be the foun-

foundation of her character; they will ſecure our eſteem: but valuable as they are, if not ſeaſoned with a pice of humour and caprice, they will ſuffer the flame to languiſh, *for want of air*, and a certain wearineſs and languor to remain: mortal poiſons to the beſt conſtituted hearts.

"Do you know, in fine, the reaſon why lovers are ſo ſoon tired of proſperity? and why women pleaſe ſo little, after having pleaſed ſo much? 'Tis becauſe both parties have, each of them, an opinion equally falſe. One imagines that there is nothing more to gain, and the other that there is nothing more to give Upon which notion, the one ſlackens his purſuit, and the other neglects to exert herſelf; or at beſt, confines her exertion within the province of ſubſtantial merit. They ſubſtitute reaſon and eſteem for paſſion. Then farewel the quickening ſalt of love: Adieu the wholeſome gales of of jealous altercation, which purge the ſtagnant lake of ſubſided affection.

"But, when I ſay that the *dead calm* of a fond commerce, ſhould be ſometimes *ruffled by breezes*, you will not, I hope, imagine that I would have two lovers ſpend their lives in ſquabbles together. I would have their piques, their expoſtulations, to ariſe from the delicacies of love, alone: that the fair one ſhould never, from puſilanimous acquieſcence, remit thoſe deferences and regards, which ſhe has both a natural, and a purchaſed right to: that from too tender a ſenſibility, ſhe would not make of love, a ſource of inquietudes, to embitter all her days; that by too ſcrupulous a conduct ſhe would not leave the lover in too great ſecurity, that he has nothing to apprehend, from that quarter: in fine, that ſhe ſhould never, from too eaſy and even a diſpoſition, have the weakneſs

to

to pa don, or paſs by, every deficiency of reſpect and a tention, which too ſecure lovers are apt to be careleſs about. Experience often proves, that women loſe the hearts of their huſbands, or lovers by an exceſs of indulgence and re niſſneſs. How weak a conduct! They make a merit of ſacrificing every thing to them; they ſpoil, and render them ungrateful. Too much bounty turns againſt themſelves at laſt; for by uſe, they begin to look upon that as their right, which was at firſt accorded them only as a favour.

Have you not known women, even among the moſt deſpicable of their ſex, to govern with a rod of iron, treat like vaſſals thoſe unfortunate perſons who happened to fall under their power, rendering them contemptible to the eyes of the world, by the uſurped and arbitrary ſway they bear over them. And yet, are not theſe the wives and miſtreſſes, who generally the longeſt maintain their empire! I know that a woman of ſenſe, breeding or moral, will never fraine her conduct, upon ſuch unſeemly examples as theſe. So militant an air is repugnant to the ſoftneſs of feminine manners, and contrary to that propriety and decency which makes the charm, even of thoſe things which lead them aſide from virtue. But mid-way between the termagant and milkſop, may perhaps be found the claſs of women the fitteſt to govern us, both for the continuance of our happineſs. and their own. We are a ſort of ſlaves, that too much lenity renders inſolent; and we frequently require to be treated like thoſe in America ——with diſcipline and chains. We have in our minds a certain innate notion of juſtice.

which

which in brins us that the hand that ules us, may fall heavy upon us ſometimes, with reaſon; and we therefore acquieſce without a murmur.

"To conclude—In every thing that falls within the province of love, women ought to be our abſolute ſovereigns.—'Tis from their hands alone, we are to receive our happineſs and pleaſures. And they will infalliby ſupply our lives with both, when they ſhall have learned to manage our affections with judgment, to moderate their own with diſcretion, and to maintain their ſway, without *expoſing*, or abuſing it.

ST. EVREMOND."

LET-

LETTER XLV.

IN two words I will anſwer you, Mar uis. In order to profit of the counſels of St Evremond, a woman muſt have firſt excited a ſtrong paſſion in her lover, and have conceived but a ſlight one in herſelf. To the reſt, we ſhall diſcuſs theſe points at a more leiſure interval. I proceed now, to your own concerns.

The ſacrifice, that the Counteſs has required from you, deſerved well the price you have ſet upon it. To quit a woman for her, who by her whole behaviour toward you, has declared herſelf willing to accept you, upon your own terms.

To renounce her publickly, in the very preſence of her rival; and with ſo little ſaving to the pride of the forſaken fair, was really an effort which merited the higheſt recompence. She could never have framed a better pretence for making you a preſent of her picture.

But to fix upon ſo ſignal an occaſion, as the day the Marchioneſs received her firſt viſits; to chuſe a time when the low *cit* had the vanity and preſumption to put on all her attractions, and diſpute the prize with a *woman of quality*; to ſpeak to her only *en paſſant*; to appear wholly wrapt up in the pleaſure of ſeeing her rival, to entertain her apart, and to form all her parties—This is an outrage, that can never be forgiven; and the *financiere*, depend upon it, will never be at peace within herſelf, until ſhe has taken ample vengeance, for ſo mortifying an affront.

Now to the ſecond article of your letter. You interrogate me whether *the laſt favour*, or rather,

the

the laſt fault, be a convincing argument of a woman's love, Ay—or No?

Yes—if you happen to be her firſt paſſion; and that ſhe has either delicacy or virtue. But even in this caſe, the proof is neither more certain, nor more flattering, than the many leſſer tokens of her fondneſs, ſhe muſt have ſuffered to eſcape her, before. Every thing that is ſaid or done by a woman who truly loves, even the moſt inſignificant to common apprehenſion, are full as ſure marks of paſſion, as thoſe which you make ſuch a rout about.

I may alſo add, that if even this woman ſhould happen to be of *a certain complexion*, the laſt favour may be rather a leſſer proof of her paſſion, than many other ſacrifices or condeſcenſions, which perhaps might have been deemed of two ſmall moment to be made account of. For in that inſtance, ſhe might have conſidered herſelf more than you: She may have had ſo much intereſt in complying, as to leave you nothing to be vain of, in perſuading. Any other in your place, might have the ſame ſucceſs.

I knew a woman once, who had been overcome, two or three times, by perſons whom ſhe had no particular liking to, while the one ſhe really loved, had ſighed and ſued in vain. It may therefore happen, that the laſt favour ſhall not prove any thing in the *theſis* you propoſe. On the contrary, a man may obtain it ſometimes, from a woman's indifference toward him. We never reſpect ourſelves ſo highly, as before thoſe we eſteem; and it muſt therefore, require a ſtronger degree of paſſion, to hurry a woman of any ſentiment, into a breach of decorum, before one whoſe good opinion ſhe ſets account by.

Your

You boaſted triumphs then, may ſ quently ariſe from motives, which far from ſatisfying your pride, might mortify your vanity, to the laſt degree, were they but ingenuouſly onfeſſed.

One perceives, ſor example, a lover ılacken in his addreſſes, on the reſiſtance. One fears his elopement, to throw himſelf at the feet of ſome kinder fair. Care for him or not, one cares not to loſe him. It is always humiliating to ſee one's ſelf forſaken. One yields, meerly for want of knowing any other method of ſtaying him. The fault ſhould not lie at her door: If he quits her after, the blathe be his. For as women attach themſelves more ſtrongly, by the very favours they beſtow, they are led into a vain notion, that ſurely gratitude ſhould form a cloſer tye, on the receipt of them. Silly novices!

Others comply from various motives; curioſity determines one; ſhe would know what love is. Another, on defect of the charms of beauty, would attract by thoſe of pleaſure. A third, has conceived an ambition to attach a man whoſe devoirs may flatter her vanity; and ſacrifices every thing to this principle. Others may yield thro' compaſſion, opportunity, importunity, reſentment to a faithleſs lover, &c.—But enough.—In ſhort, the heart is ſo capricious, and the reaſons which determine it ſo whimſical and various, that it is impoſſible to enumerate all the ſprings that govern its motions. But, if we are apt to miſtake the means of fixing ye, ye are alſo as often deceived with regard to the proofs of our paſſion. Was there any delicacy among your ſex, they would perceive tokens of our fondneſs in many things, more than our moſt ſignal favours.

Tell

Tell the Marquis, what have I done to Monſieur *de Coulanges?* He has not come near me, this month paſt. Tho' in my own defence, I muſt ſay, that I always received him with the higheſt politeneſs. He is one of the moſt agreeable men I know. I ſhall be angry, if you do not bring him to ſee me, on my return from *Verſailles*. I long to hear him ſing the laſt ode he has compoſed; they ſay it is extremely fine.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XLVI.

YOU are extremely polite Marquis in your expreſſions upon my abſence. If I have not written to you ſince my coming to the country, it was, becauſe I thought I had left you in a moſt proſperous ſituation; and this conſideration rendered me quite eaſy about you, Beſides, I thought that love ſhould be indulged in all its rights, as its empire is generally ſo ſhort. And as friendſhip is a quite different province, I waited patiently, 'till ſome interval of pleaſure might afford you leiſure, to attend to my correſpondence.

Do you know how I was employed all the while? I amuſed myſelf with combining the events which muſt naturally ariſe, from the ſituation of affairs in which I left your little ſociety. I knew the arts of the Counteſs, againſt her rival, and concluded that an open rupture muſt be the conſequence of them. I foreſaw the Marchioneſs would take part, rather with the latter; for the *financiere* is not quite ſo handſome as the former; which muſt have been a deciſive argument, for declaring in her favour, as this alliance leaves her in leſs danger of an *eclipſe*. I knew that all this would terminate in a ſquabble, among the women; but throughout this revolution, I am glad to find, that your good fortune ſtill maintains its ground.

Every day will ſupply you with new reaſons, for loving and eſteeming your charming Counteſs. A woman of ſuch real merit, and ſo engaging a a figure, muſt win upon you, in proportion to your

your acquaintance with her. Let nothing weaken your attachment to her. You have, 'tis true, obtained a confeſſion of her paſſion toward you. Is ſhe the leſs eſtimable, upon that account? Ought it not rather, to augment the value of a prize, every degree of certainty you acquire, of your being the ſole poſſeſſor? Nay, ſhould ſhe even yield you the *laſt proof*, which was the ſubject of a late letter, ought this to leſſen your eſteem?

You'll excuſe my freedom; but I cannot help ſaying, that the *happy*, of your ſex, too often betray a moſt unmanly meanneſs of ſentiment, breeding and moral, in their conduct, toward the *unhappy*, of ours. Their narrow ſouls make no diſtinction, between a *weakneſs*, and a *vice*; and puniſh for *misfortunes*, as for *crimes*. What height of depravation, to add inſult to perfidy? Can they not become inconſtant, without being unjuſt, alſo? Were it not enough, that *apathy* ſucceed to *paſſion*, but muſt *diſguſt* purſue *deſire?* Even were ſhe *criminal*, is it the *receiver*, the *accomplice*, that ſhould inflict the penalty? A *banditti* would behave with more juſtice, with more honour. They ne'er *betray*—they ne'er *impeach*—except to ſave a life.

Preſerve, then, your ſentiments for the Counteſs, intire, to the end; nor ever, let your event be what it may, ſuffer a falſe opinion to interrupt the progreſs, which her merits muſt naturally make, both in your affections and eſteem. It is not their *defeat*, in itſelf, which ought to render women deſpicable. The manner in which they defend, ſurrender, and conduct themſelves after, ſhould be the ſole rule of thoſe judgments, the world has a right to form, either of *compaſſion*, or *contempt*.

Madame *de la Fayette*, you ſay, ſeems to think, that my laſt letter was on too free a ſubject. You ſee what cenſures your indiſcretion has laid me under. But, ſhe did not conſider, that I was no more culpable in that particular, than a lecturer in anatomy. I analize the *moral*, as he diſſects the *natural* man. Would you not think him too ſcrupulous, to omit in his courſe, thoſe parts of his ſubject, which might afford to idle minds, occaſions of looſe reflection? It is not the nature of things, that conſtitutes indecence; neither the words, nor even the ideas. 'Tis the intention, of thoſe who ſpeak, or the depravity, of them who hear. Madame *de la Fayette* is the perſon in the world, whom I ſhould have leaſt ſuſpected, for ſuch a criticiſm. I ſhall wait upon the Counteſs to-morrow, and convince her of *la Fayette*'s error.

Adeu.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

HOW can you imagine, Marquis, that I ſhould be ſurprized, at the new lures the *financiere* has thrown out before you? Do you think I am a ſtranger to women? I never doubted for a moment, that ſhe would uſe every artifice of coquetry, to ſnatch you from the Counteſs. She may, perhaps, have conceived ſome little inclination toward you, herſelf; but moderate your vanity upon that occaſion; for be aſſured, that her moſt active motive is, the tranſport of revenge. Her pride is intereſted to mortify her rival, for having already obtained the preference. Women never forgive ſuch an affront as this. And if he who is the ſubject of the quarrel, be not the principal object of their pique, they always make uſe of him, for the purpoſes of their reſentment.

You have met with in the *financiere*, all you required in the Counteſs, to confirm your attachment to her. She tenders you ſpontaneouſly, the reward of thoſe ſervices you proffer, and which by way of further compromiſe, ſhe may, perhaps, remit you. And I much fear, you are indelicate enough, to accept of ſuch mean terms. For, to your ſhame be it ſpoken the motto of all men's hearts is, *To the moſt complying*

But, ſhould you not bluſh, to deſerve the leaſt reproach from the Counteſs? What ort of perſon do you ſeem to prefer before her? A woman, without delicacy or love; moved by no attractions, but thoſe of pleaſure; more vain than ſenſible; more voluptuous than tender; and more

amorous than fond: who values nothing in you but your youth—and the qualities which attend it.

You are quite ſenſible of the whole worth of her rival; you acknowledge the wrongs you do her; you confeſs yourſelf to be a monſter of ingratitude, and yet you cannot exert reſolution enough to merit her forgiveneſs! In truth, Marquis, I am at a loſs to account for you; and begin to agree with Madame *de Sevigne*, who ſays, that her ſon knows his duty, and can reaſon upon it well; but his paſſions hurry him away; ſo that, *it is not his head that is mad, but his heart.* (e).

It would be idle here to repeat to me what I formerly advanced, about the cavalier manner in which the affair of love was to be treated. At that time, I rather amuſed myſelf with ſome light reflections, than pretended to give you advice in form. Beſides, the queſtion then, regarded only a ſlight, a temporary attachment, a common miſtreſs; but your preſent ſituation is of quite a different nature. I am certain, that there is not, in the whole circuit of *Paris*, any woman, who can be brought even within the degrees of compariſon, with that amiable perſon you are now quitting, ſo fooliſhly. And for what reaſon, I pray you? Becauſe, forſooth, her reſiſtance mortifies your vanity. Kind, or unkind, we equally loſe ye! What bonds remain there, to with hold ſuch fugitives?

However, I agree with you, that when a paſſion is in *embers*, it is no eaſy matter to receive the flame. *One has it no more in their power, to continue love, than they had to reſiſt it.* I confeſs

(e) In her letters to Madame *de Grignan*, her daughter.

the

the truth of ſuch maxims, but confeſs them with regret, when I conſider, that in conſequehce of them, you are quitting the *jewel* for the *paſte*; that you renounce a ſolid happineſs, and laſting pleaſures, for tranſient joys, and capricious appetites.

But, I foreſee that all my reaſonings will not reclaim you. I begin even to apprehend, that you are grown weary of my moral; and to ſpeak the truth, I think it almoſt ridiculous to preach up conſtancy to you, after it has appeared your love has ceaſed, and that—*your heart is mad*. I reſign you, therefore, to your evil genius; though I may, perhaps, ſtill have good-nature, or curioſity enough, to accompany you in your future wanderings. What avails it to afflict one's ſelf? Should I aſſume the air of a pedagogue?—Not I truly—We ſhould neither of us gain any thing by the bargain. I ſhould only tire myſelf, without reforming you.

So, fare you well.

LETTER XLVIII.

I Muſt confeſs, Marquis, that your late behaviour toward the Counteſs, had put me a good deal out of humour with you; and I was very near breaking off all commerce between us, upon conſidering what a good-for-nothing ſort of a fellow you are. But the eaſineſs with which I have relented, at your inſtances, makes me imagine, that my friendſhip for you has ſome mixture of weakneſs in it.

What you ſay is true enough, that *to continue one's attachment to a perſon, only while they liſten to our counſels, is but being half a friend.* The more dangerous your ſituation is, the leſs certainly, I ſhould abandon you. But, one is not always maſter of their firſt movements Whatever efforts I made, to philoſophize away your guilt, were borne down, by the ſuperior intereſts I had taken, in the misfortunes of my fair ally. And who could avoid thinking you highly criminal, when you had given ſo charming a woman cauſe of complaint againſt you? But at preſent, ſince I find her ſituation beginning to grow eaſier every day, I am almoſt ſorry for the coolneſs of my laſt letter.

I ſhall henceforth, content myſelf in compaſſionating her, without ever urging you any farther, upon this ſubject; ſo let us carry on our former intercourſe, with the ſame careleſs freedom as before. You need apprehend no more lectures from me; for I perceive they would, after this, be both uſeleſs, and out of ſeaſon.

I wiſh you health. Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XLIX.

YOU never imagined, Marquis, that it might be ſometimes more difficult to diſengage one's ſelf from a miſtreſs, than to gain one. However, you have experience of it in your own caſe, at preſent. Your diſguſt at the *financiere*, ſurpriſes me only in this, that it did not happen ſooner. Can it be poſſible, that acquainted as you are with her character, you can be ſo far impoſed upon by her, as to miſtake the deſpair ſhe affects at your indifference, for the ſymptom of a real paſſion? That you ſhould ſtill remain the dupe of her intrigue, not only raiſes my wonder, but compaſſion too. Yet, is it not your own vanity that helps to carry on the illuſion? And in truth, it is one of a very peculiar nature, which can be able to flatter you with the love of ſuch a woman. But men are really ſo ſelf-ſufficient, that they would be puffed up with the fondneſs of the moſt abandoned courteſan.

But, prithee undeceive yourſelf. A woman that you quit, who is of the character of your amorous fair, has be aſſured, no manner of concern in her misfortune, except from her own ſingle intereſt. She would endeavour, by her emotions and her tears, to perſuade you, that your merit and accompliſhments are the ſole cauſes of her regret; that the failure of your affections is the only loſs ſhe has to lament; and that ſhe knows no perſon upon earth, who can be capable of repairing her damage.

But, all theſe pretexts are truly diſingenuous It is not an afflicted miſtreſs, who implores you 'Tis a vain woman, mortified at having her own

inconſtancy anticipated; piqued at the weak prevalence of her charms, diſtracted how to ſupply your loſs, on the ſudden: proud to aſſume an air of ſenſibility, and to appear deſerving of a better fate. In a word, ſhe only ſeems to juſtify that maxim of Monſieur *de la Rochefaucault*, *that women lament not their lovers for forſaking them, ſo much as to be thought more worthy of being beloved*.

It is quite ridiculous, for the *financiere* to make an harangue on *ſentiment*, and indeed ſhe muſt have a very ſlight opinion of you, to think of impoſing it on you. But, let us *join iſſue* on this point. The *Chevalier* is at preſent, diſengaged. Get him to replace you with her; and I dare anſwer for it, that in a letter or two, at the fartheſt, you will let me have the ſatisfaction to hear, that her deſpair has been perfectly conſoled.

A woman, at her time of life, begins to apprehend leſt ſhe might not be able to make herſelf amends for the loſs of a lover, and may be obliged to undervalue her charms, by being reduced to accept the firſt offer. Her concern may perhaps be real; but you may more probably miſtake the ſources of it Break then, her bonds aſunder, without remorſe. In a punctilio of conſtancy or delicacy for ſuch an object, you muſt certainly appear as ridiculous, as you were truly criminal in your deficiency in both theſe reſpects upon a late occaſion.

Do you remember, Marquis, what Monſieur *de Coulanges* ſaid to us one day, upon a general topic; that *conſtancy was a virtue in perſons of ordinary merit only*. Have they had the fortune to win the favour of ſome capricious fair, the conſciouſneſs of their own ſlight worth, fixes their at-

attachments, and intimidates from adventure; in deſpair of ſucceeding in ſuch another *caſe*. Sufficiently happy in having *taken a heart by ſurprize*, they fear to loſe *a ſubſtance* by graſping at *a ſhadow*. And as the ſmalleſt interval of conſideration, might afford the miſtreſs leiſure to reflect upon the ſlight value of the lover, what is their policy? They make a *virtue of neceſſity*; they found a ſuperſtition upo love; and employ reaſon to preſerve a heart which they owe merely to caprice, to accident or ſurprize.

Prithee do not rank yourſelf in ſo inſignificant a claſs. Hearts are the *coin* of gallantry: amiable perſons the *commodities* of this commerce: *circulation* is the life of trade, and equally benefits the community. A conſtant perſon, then, is as blameable as a miſer, who arreſts the medium of traffic, and hoards up a treaſure uſeleſs in itſelf, unleſs ſet free for the emolument of others.

Beſides, what ſatisfaction io there in a miſtreſs, to whom one is held attached, by reaſon only? How languid the pleaſure! What violence ſuſtained in feigning to love, where paſſion has ſurceaſed! It rarely happens, that fondneſs becomes extinct on both ſides, at the ſame time; and then what a misfortune is conſtancy! It may be compared to the cruelty of that antient tyrant, who chained the living and the dead together. What difference is there, between the inflictions?

Root out a prejudice then, ſo injurious to ſociety. Follow my advice — tender your addreſſes to the Preſident's widow you mentioned to me lately; ſhe may perhaps lie a little heavy on hands now and then; but at leaſt, ſhe will not degrade your paſſion. If, as you ſay, ſhe be as deficient in ſenſe, as ſhe abounds in beauty,

her empire will not continue long; you will be then the ſooner reſtored to liberty again; and I doubt not but another, or many other galantries may ſucceed. Nay, perhaps you may not wait the ſlowneſs of ſucceſſion; for I perceive, from the libertiniſm of your letter, that you are become quite a *man of mode*. The new ſyſtem you have adopted, is perfectly in that character, and is of admirable œconomy. Never to finiſh one amour, 'till you have commenced another; and not to withdraw yourſelf from a firſt engagement, but in proportion to your progreſs in a ſecond.——Can any thing be better contrived? But, as all theſe ſage precautions may leave one unluckily unprovided; as ſome event beyond the reach of human foreſight, may poſſibly diſconcert your politics or rather *confound your devices*——to eſtabliſh it as a principle, to part always on friendly terms, with your former miſtreſſes, in order to reſerve ſomewhat to amuſe your *vexations*—this I muſt confeſs, Marquis, ſhews you to be a perfect *Martinet* in galantry. In ſhort, it muſt be impoſſible to make any improvement upon the wiſdom of ſuch a plan.

Adieu.

I do not know how I have the courage to write you ſuch long and ſilly letters. I find ſo much pleaſure in correſponding with you, that it would alarm me, if I did not know my heart well. But, I recollect it is at preſent diſengaged; and I muſt therefore keep on my guard, for ſome time, as I find you have fallen into a humour lately, of ſaying tender things to me; and I don't know how ſoon I may take it into my head to believe you.

Once more, Adieu.

LET-

LETTER L.

YOU may make a jeſt of it, if you pleaſe; but I do affirm it for a truth, that you are not, in reality, ſmitten with the fair *Preſidente*. Believe me, Marquis, that I ſee farther into your heart than you do yourſelf. I have known a number of well-meaning people, with all the ſincerity in the world, imagine like you, that they were mightily in love; while, in fact, they were not in the leaſt actuated by any one ſymptom of that paſſion.

It is of the diſorders of the heart, as it is of thoſe of the body; ſome are real, and others imaginary. Every thing that attaches you to a woman, is not always love. The habit of being together, the facility of ſeeing each other, the flying from one's ſelf, the amuſements of galantry, the deſire of pleaſing, the hope of ſucceſs; in a word, a thouſand other motives, which reſemble an elephant as much as a paſſion, are what men, more frequently than is imagined, miſtake for love: and women alſo aſſiſt to confirm you in this error. Flattered at the homage they receive, while it feeds their vanity, they rarely examine into the philoſophy of the matter. And are they not in the right of it? What a deal of pleaſure would they loſe!

To the motives I have been mentioning, you may add another, which is as likely as any to deceive you with regard to the nature of your affections. The *Preſidente* is certainly as pretty a woman as any in *Paris*; juſt entered into her *weeds*; and has lately refuſed the addreſſes of a man of high

high merit and accompliſhments. Nothing could ſurely flatter your vanity more, than ſuch a conqueſt, which might procure you at once that *empty* fame, you men are generally ſo puffed up with. This, friend Marquis, is what you call love; and it may be a difficult matter to undeceive you: for when ſanguine minds have once conceived an *imaginary* diſorder, the moſt foreign ſymptoms are apt to be referred to the *real one*.

It may be entertaining enough, in a ſhort time to hear with what dignity you will ſpeak of your ſuppoſed ſentiments; how ſeriouſly you will think they have a right to challenge a grateful return. And what may be pleaſanter ſtill, would be the deferences that ſhe herſelf might imagine to be their due. But, the event may clear up your underſtanding, and you will then be the firſt to laugh at that air of importance you had given to ſo inſignificant an affair.

Shall I tell you the whole of my opinion about you? I am perſuaded that you will never be in love again. You will be ſenſible for the future, of but wandering likings, ſlight attachments, or capricious engagements. Its arrows will but ſlightly glance o'er your *coat of mail*. You will no more, indeed, ſuſtain its pains; but can you ever again experience its pleaſures? Can you ever expect to find, in ſuch *extempore* paſſions as you have thrown yourſelf away upon, any of thoſe delicate and delicious moments, which formerly framed your higheſt bliſs! I do not mean to flatter you; but I think I owe you the juſtice to ſay, that your heart is formed for refined pleaſures. It is not you therefore, upon whom I charge the unhappy diſſipation of your preſent life; it is upon the ſilly young men you aſſociate with;

with

with whom the *uſe* of pleaſure, is its *abuſe* and example leads you. But this giddineſs of the ſenſes, will ſooner or later, cure itſelf; and you will be then ſenſible—at leaſt, I wiſh it ſincerely that you have been miſtaken in two inſtances, with regard to the ſituation of your heart. You think it is enamoured of the P eſidente, you will then perceive your error. You think that it has ceaſed all ſentiment for the Counteſs. But remember what I have told you. A time may come, when we ſhall talk upon this ſubject, with more pleaſur and leiſure. Let us proceed now to the reſt of your letter.

I believe you will hardly deny, Marquis, but you were at a loſs how to empioy your time this morning, when you amuſed yourſelf ir reading over all my letters; and I fancy that you were not a little out of humour alſo, by your *playing the critic* upon them as you have done. Some brilliant party, ſome flattering aſſignation, muſt certainly have failed you juſt then. But I do not mean to elude the difficulty you propoſe I appear, you ſay, to contradict myſelf ofter. Should I acknowledge this to be true, might I not, at the ſame time, make the apology that *la Bruyere* did to ſome cavils of the ſame kind? *It is not I that contradict myſelf, but the heart upon which I reaſon.*

But do you conclude from hence, that all I have ſaid on this ſubject is falſe? I can hardly think you ſo ignorant. However it is not unlikely, that being perplexed by the various ſituations I have found you in, I might have appeared ſometimes to deſtroy thoſe maxims I had before advanced, upon different occaſions. May it not be probable, that upon ſeeing you in danger of falling into error, I might have preſſed too far thoſe truths, which weakly urged might be thought too

too insufficient to have reclaimed you? How do I know, in fine, but that being interested in the happiness of a friend, my warmth to serve her may have somewhat warped my sincerity? But one would fancy that I was as idle as you, to answer seriously to the cavils of your letter. Might I not have perceived at first sight, that there was more pique than criticism in it? But this is the last time you shall ever abuse my good-nature Adieu.——I am going to console myself for your ingratitude with the conversation of Monsieur de - A very different person from you, I assure you.

What pity 'tis, that you are not a woman! I should have so much pleasure in disputing with you about our new-fashioned head-dresses. I never saw any thing so enormous as the height of them. However, Marquis, I really think that if the *Presidente* does not put on one, incontinently you cannot in decency, continue your devoirs any longer to her.

LETTER

LETTER LI.

'TIS then a ſettled affair, it ſeems.—Say what I will, you remain ſtill enamoured of the *Preſidente*. She has ſacrificed a beloved rival to you, and you are in triumph. How ready is your vanity to take advantage of every thing! But, I ſhould laugh heartily, if your boaſted victory ſhould end in her giving you a *audience of leave*, in a day or two: For, it is not at all impoſſible, but that the ſacrifice you ſo much glory in, may be meerly a *fineſſe d'amour*. During the free commerce you have had among women, have you never picked up ſo much experience, as to ſuſpect every ſentiment they affect? But, if your yielding fair one ſhould have only played you off, to awake the drowſy paſſion of her former Caladon; if you ſhall find yourſelf, after all, but made a tool of, and uſed to the *whip* of artifice, or *ſpur* of jealouſy, I beg you may not loſe your ſenſes in wonder and amazement.

The *Preſidente*, you'll tell me, has not the leaſt manner of cunning, and is therefore incapable of ſuch a ſtratagem. My dear Marquis, love is an admirable tutor; and the dulleſt perſons imaginable in other matters, frequently diſcover a more ſubtle, juſt and certain diſcernment, than the wiſeſt heads, where the intereſt of their hearts happen to come into queſtion. But, let us quit your particular inſtance, and ſpeak in general, of men in the like circumſtances.

They imagine, juſt as you do, that the ſacrifice which is made them of a rival, ſuppoſes their ſu-

ſuperiority over him. But how often does it happen, that the formality of this renounce, is a mere farce? If ſhe really diſcards him, either ſhe loved him, or he did not. If ſhe had loved him, 'tis plain by her quitting, that ſhe loves him no longer: And in that caſe, what glory have you to boaſt, upon ſuch a preference? If ſhe never loved him, what have you to be proud of, in triumphing over a man, toward whom ſhe had always been indifferent?

There is another caſe alſo, where you may be preferred, without having any more reaſon to flatter yourſelf on the conqueſt; and that is, when the vanity of your miſtreſs is greater than her paſſion for the diſgraced lover. Your rank, figure, character, and fortune, may determine ſuch a one in your favour. It is very rare, (I ſpeak it to the confuſion of women, nor are men a bit more rational in this reſpect) that a lover, who has nothing but paſſion and high ſentiments to urge, can long ſtand his ground againſt one who is diſtinguiſhed by his quality, his ſtation, his dependents, his liveries, equipage, &c. (f) * * * * * * * * * * *

Beſides, the deceaſed preſident was a judge, and with-

(f) This paſſage which follows here, in the French, appears unintelligible to me. The conſtruction of the words is eaſy enough, but the meaning or ſcope of them, is difficult. I have, therefore, left them out in the traſlation; chuſing raher to give *no ſenſe* than *nonſenſe*. But ſhall give them here, in the original, to exerciſe the ingenuity of my readers —Des que l'Amant le plus tendre peut faire rougir une femme; des qu'elle n'oſe avouer ſon Vainquer; des qu'elle n'oſe meme ſe faire un merite de la ſacrificer, je le predis, ſon regne ne ſera pas long Elle ne ſera embarraſſee que de choiſir dans toutes le bonnes raiſons qu'elle aura de ſe quitter.

without doubt, as formal and old fashioned as his band or peruke. What an impreſſion to be worn away, by a courtier and a warior, ſuch as you!

Well, Marquis, will you believe my prophecies again? What did I tell you lately? Has the *Chevalier* found it ſuch a difficulty to perſuade your *Penelope?*—This deſponding miſtreſs, juſt expiring on the loſs of one lover, in leſs than a fortnight, has accepted another, pretends a paſſion for him, ſurrenders and is forſaken. Has ſhe loſt any time, think you? your ſentiments, I pray, upon this ſubject.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER LII.

YES, Marquis, it is to my friendſhip, it is to my counſels, that the Counteſs owes the tranquility ſhe now begins to enjoy. But I cannot perceive for what reaſon you ſhould complain of the indifference ſhe marks towards you. And do you expect pity from me? I ſhall have great compaſſion for the wounds of vanity truly! Men are the oddeſt creatures! They would have women ſtill regard them as objects of conſequence, tho' in quitting them they generally neglect nothing to manifeſt their indifference towards them.

What ſignifies to you, the love or hate of one, you have now no longer any paſſion for? Your jealouſy of the little Duke, is ſo unaccountably ridiculous, that it made me laugh outright, when I came to that part of your letter. Is it not natural and rational too, that a woman ſhall conſole herſelf for your loſs, by liſtening to the addreſſes of a perſon who knows ſo much better, how to prize her beauty and merit? Now prithee inform me, my good client, by what rule in equity you are become *plaintiff* in this ſuit? Examine your conſcience and ſubſcribe to *Madame de Sevigne*'s expreſſion, that *you hear is mad*, my poor Marquis!

However, the propoſition you make me is whimſical enough. It would be ſome ſport certainly to aſſiſt in your ſcheme or revenge, againſt your faithleſs miſtreſs; if it was only out of ſpleen, on one hand, and for the oddity of the thing on the other, we ſhould commence a ſort of a mock-amour, forthwith. But ſuch a frolic may take an unlucky turn perhaps; for love, even the moſt innocent may be compared to a kitten, that

is

is apt to ſcratch you, while you are only playing with it.

Therefore, friend Marquis you may keep your heart to yourſelf, for me; I ſhould make a ſcruple to deprive commerce of ſo choice a commodity. Beſides, I am reall ſo weary of the inſipidity of men, that for he future, I ſhall trouble myſelf with none of them, except my friends. One always feels ſome regret at parting with a lover. I begin to taſte the ſweets of repoſe, and would continu to enjoy them.

It is whimſical enough, that you ſhould firſt imagine you needed conſolation yourſelf, and then take it into your head that I required. the ſame relief, becauſe the Marquis *de* - - - - is gone upon his embaſſy. Indeed you are deceived. My friends ſuffice me, as I told you before; and if you would remain among that number, I adviſe you to ſend me no more *billet-doux*—otherwiſe—

Adieu Marquis.

LETTER LIII.

I Declare, Marquis, that I ſhall at once break off all manner of commerce with you, for the future, if you continue to accoſt me in the way you have lately done. What evil ſpirit has put it into your head, to attempt rivalling the abſent? Was any creature ever ſo teazed and rallied, as I was yeſterday evening? However, you entered into your part with ſuch addreſs, that whatever mind I had to be angry witn you, I could not find in my heart to be ſo. What kind of event this may take, I cannot ſay; but this one thing is certain, that you ſpend your time very idly; for be aſſured, that I have not the leaſt ſymptom of paſſion for you at preſent; and what is more, I can anſwer for it, that I never ſhall. Yes, Sir,—never. But, 'tis merry enough, to perſuade one that they are afflicted, that they want conſolation; in ſhort, to take upon you to judge of others feelings, better than they can themſelves! This is like the impertinence of the ſhoe-maker, who pretended to tell his cuſtomers where the ſhoe pinched them.

But to ſpeak of this matter, a little more ſeriouſly. Prithee reflect for a moment, upon the folly of your attempt. Would it be generous, would it be decent in me, think you, to ſupplant my friend? For a woman who has aſſumed the character of a *Mentor* with you, who has acted the part of a parent to you, to dwindle, after all, into that of a miſtreſs? Rambling libertine, as you are, if youth and beauty could not hold you, what bands ſhould ſuch an old maid as I,

pretend

pretend to tye you with? Perhaps your ſole view in my conqueſt, may be merely to know, whether love is the ſame with me in practice, as it is in ſpeculation. But I will ſave you the expence of ſo much time and trouble, and ſhall ſatisfy your curioſity, *gratis*.

You muſt know, then, that women, one and all of us, rarely act conformably to their ſentiments. This is what you would have the fulleſt inſtance of, in a commerce of galantry with me All that I have ſaid to you, upon love and women, would not inſtruct you after what manner I ſhould conduct myſelf on ſuch an occaſion. There is vaſt difference between thinking and feeling; between acting for ourſelves, and reaſoning for others. You would then diſcover in me a number of ſingularities, that would ſoon make you weary of your engagements. I have quite a different caſt of mind from moſt women.—You may know them all, without knowing *Ninon*. And believe me, that all you might diſcover, never extraordinary in me, would not repay you half the expence of inveſtigation. You ſet my price too high, I tell you before-hand: you expend too much in expectation; more than I am reſponſible for. I ſhould never *quit coſt*, believe me. Diſpoſe of yourſelf in a more brilliant liſt. The court affords you groupes of young and fair, with whom, you will run no hazard of tiring yourſelf with exertions of wit and philoſophy.

I confeſs, however, that I ſhould have been pleaſed if you had called in to ſee me to day; for I was moſt of the afternoon, plagued with a diſpute about the antients and moderns. It is bothering my head ſo much ſtill, that I amverynear accepting your compliments ſeriouſly, that I am not yet far enough on the decline, to occupy myſelf entirely

tirely with the ſtudy of ſcience or to bury myſelf alive, with muſty ancients. If you would behave a little rationally, and drop the humour of making ſpeeches, I really think I ſhould prefer your company to any other to interrupt and enliven, now and then, ſuch ſerious occupations. But you are ſo ungovernable, and ſuch a profligate, that I dare hardly invite you to ſup with me to-morrow. I miſtake in ſaying *to-morrow*; for it is now near two o'clock in the morning, and I conſider that my letter cannot reach you 'till noon: So take notice, that it is this very evening I expect you.

Will you complain of me now? Is not this an aſſignation in form? But let this careleſs freedom convince you, that I am not much afraid of you, and that I ſhall attend to your amorous views, no farther than will juſt amuſe me. You ought to know that I am not a perſon to be eaſily impoſed upon, that way. I have ye all by heart.

Adieu.

LETTER.

LETTER LVI.

I Ought no longer, to conceal from you, the laſt reſolve of the Counteſs, with regard to you. While I could preſerve her ſecret without betraying the friendſhip I had conceived for you, I have been faithful to her. But ſhould I reſerve what I am now going to communicate to you, you would probably have cauſe one day to reproach me ſeverely. Notwithſtanding the many infidelities you have been guilty of, whatever pains ſhe has taken, perſuade you that you were intirely forgotten, you have never ceaſed to be moſt tenderly remembered by her.——Tho' ſhe has endeavoured to puniſh you, by an affected indifference, ſhe could never refrain from the pleaſure of ſeeing you: and it was in compliment to her, that I have ſometimes feigned quarrels with you, in order to bring you the oftener on your penitentials, before me—But all theſe ſhifts has not been ſufficient, to ſatisfy a heart ſo intimately affected; and the Counteſs is upon the very criſis of executing a deſign, which I have a long time oppoſed. You may inform yourſelf of the particulars, from the letter ſhe wrote to me yeſterday; and which I ſend you incloſed.

A Letter from the Counteſs, to Madame de L'ENCLOS.

"If you would remain my friend, dear Ninon, ceaſe to combat my reſolution. You know that it is not a ſudden tranſport. It is neither the reſult of a momentary reſentment, a haſty pique, nor

nor of despa r. I have concealed nothing from you. The p(ssession of the Marquis's heart, would have constituted my highest felicity, had I been able to insure it for life. I should have been certain of losing t for ever, if I had been indiscreet enough to ave accorded him those favours he solicited for. His inconstancy has shewn me, that the opposite conduct is not always a certain method of preserv ng a lover. One must renounce this passion entirely, since men are found incapable of an attachment more tender tho' not less p ire, than that of simpl e friendship.

" You know too w ll, that I am not sufficiently cured, not to feel perturbations every time I see the Marquis —Flight is the only remedy for this evil, and it is the one I am determined to betake myself to. I am not in the least apprehensive of what the world may say, upon my retreat into the country. I have prevented those who might perhaps be surpized on this occasion. It is known that I have lately gained a considerable proceſs against my husbands executors. I have made a plausible pretext of going to take possession of the estate of - - - -, which they contested with me. I have thus obviated the malignant satisfaction of the public, in putting their own construction upon my election of solitude ; and at the same time, removed all suspicion from the Marquis, of his having the least part in this determination.

" I send you herewith, his picture and letters. Good Gods, how weak is human nature ! Must it require a conflict then, to quit a plague ? But the strife is over—and my resolves shall never falter more. Sympathize with me the mean while, my dear friend; and remember the promise you have given me in confidence, to declare the most perfect

perfect indifference on my par Whoever breaks off in resentment, publishes their pique and regret at the rupture. 'Tis but a modest way of begging a reconciliation. And as I have now, not the least desire of renewing my engagements with the Marquis, I would have you return him the articles I send you; obliging him, as we agreed upon before, to make me the same restitution. You may say, that the exigencies of my affairs has required me to leave *Paris*, for some time; but I intreat that you will not be the first to mention me to him.

"I should be inconsolable, my dear Ninon, at parting from you, did I not hope to see you frequently in my retirement. You write freely to your friends; and if you judge of them by the tenderness and esteem they bear you, there is not a single one among them, more worthy of that title, than me. I reckon upon your correspondence, 'till I shall have the higher pleasure of your converse. You are not now to learn my sentiments about you. Farewel."

I have no advice to give you, Marquis, upon this occasion; and all the favour I shall desire of you is, never to expose the disingenuousness of my conduct, in this affair, which the Countess would have just reason to resent. All that I have to excuse me to myself, is that you have loved her too fondly, to look upon this resolve with indifference; and if I am not much mistaken, I might perhaps have injured the interest of both, by concealing it from you

Adieu.

LETTER LV.

I AM charmed at what you have done, Marquis, and you are a moſt worthy creature, after all. Fear not—Your behaviour, my inſtances, and better than either, her own unextinguiſhed flame, will conſpire to conquer the reſiſtance of the Counteſs, every thing ought to determine her to accept the offer you make her, of your hand; and I can venture to promiſe you, even at preſent that her pride alone reſiſts equally our intreaties, and her own inclinations.

I preſſed her warmly this morning, to declare in your favour; and her laſt defence was, the fear of now revolts, on your part. "Chear up, ſays I; one very promiſing circumſtance, on his ſide, is, that he is now undeceived with regard to other women, upon comparing them with the one he had quitted. Men of ſenſe or principle, have but a certain number of treſpaſſes to permit themſelves. The Marquis has already paſſed through thoſe which his youth and condition of life ſeemed almoſt to juſtify. He indulged himſelf in them, at a time when they might be at leaſt excuſable. He has ſped all the frolics of his age and claſs: and having thus paid his tribute to the *paſſion of the times*, he is become now *free of life*; and may be at liberty to act agreeably to reaſon and virtue, for the remainder of it. The only objection, *of modern days*, that is likely to ſtand againſt him, may be his appearing too fond a huſband: But this is a foible which will readily be pardoned in him, by thoſe who either ſee, or know you.

"You riſk nothing then, my dear Counteſs; you have yourſelf paſſed through the character of a *fine*

a *fine lady*, but had too much ſenſe to continue in it long. You quitted it upon trial, and the Marquis imitates your example Remit therefore, his paſt exceſſes, and ſuffer not your obſtinacy to kill him with deſpair. The world would exclaim againſt you."

In ſhort, I prayed and preſſed, without ceaſing, and left her in a ſort of irreſolution, which I dare ſay will ſoon be determined in your favour, as her reſiſtance has probably begun already to render her extremely uneaſy.

Well, Marquis, if the agitation that ariſes from all this, will give you leiſure to reflect upon what I formerly told you, will you not be apt to think me ſtill in contradiction with myſelf? I had at firſt adviſed you to treat the paſſion of love *en cavalier* and to trouble yourſelf with no more of it, than might juſt ſerve to amuſe you; and that either as lover or galant, you ſhould ſuffer yourſelf to be bound, by a *ſlip-knot* only. But then I ſpoke to you upon a general topic, and relative to the generality of women merely. Could I at that time, propheſy that you would be ſo happy, to meet and engage with ſuch a charmer as the Counteſs, who to the beauties of her own ſex has joined all the merits of yours? What a lucky mortal you are! Now going to poſſeſs in the ſame perſon, at once the moſt amiable miſtreſs, and the moſt eſtimable friend! Deign to admit me a third in this choice union, and I ſhall not deem myſelf leſs fortunate than either. For if there be in nature an higher bliſs than rejoicing in the happineſs of our friends, we muſt attend 'till angels ſhall pronounce it.

Farewel.

END OF THE LETTERS.

THE CONCLUSION

THE TRANSLATOR TO THE READER.

I Have here finiſhed this Collection of Letters, which I hope will entertain the reader, as much as they have done the tranſlator; for in truth, there is an uncommon deal of wit, humour, ſpirit, and philoſophic ſenſe, running thro' the whole.

However, it may be plainly perceived in theſe writings, that *Ninon's* principles of philoſophy, had been tainted by her converſation with the greateſt male wits of France, *La Bruyere*, *Rochefaucault*, *St. Evremond*, *Fontaine*, &c. For the cynical manner, in which ſhe treats the ſubject of love, is but part of that diſingenuous philoſophy, which the French writers in general, apply to every human affection or moral; reſolving friendſhip, gratitude, filial and paternal ties, in ſhort every

every ſpecies and degree of virtue into a *ſelfiſh motive*.

'Tis true, that Madame *de l'Enclos* has laid open the avenues, and inmoſt receſſes of the female heart, betrayed its weakneſs, and pointed out thoſe peculiar foibles, where the arts of men may attack it with moſt probability of ſucceſs. But then, it may at the ſame time be obſerved, that ſhe deſcribes her ſex, in thoſe inſtances, as in *a ſtat of nature*, unimproved by education, unreſtrained by religion, and unaſſiſted by grace: And truly, under ſuch a ſtate of *original ſin*, ſhe has been perhaps, at too great an expence of addreſs, to circumvent ſo defenceleſs an enemy.

Moſt of the French writers determine the morals of mankind, from the ſentiments of their own breaſts. But reaſoning from particulars to generals, has never been admitted for ſound philoſophy. Tho' a thief at the gallows, confeſſes his conſtant diſpoſition to ſteal, we are not ſurely from thence to urge, that another man may not view a purſe of gold, with as little inclination to purloin it, as to rob a tulip of its colour.

To this claſs of writers, I could wiſh that the world would join in refuſing their arrogated title of *Moraliſts*; and more juſtly ſtile them *Satiriſts*. Tho' I think that even this, would be treating them with too much reſpect; for as they ſpeak of human nature, rather with the contempt of a *Lampooner*, I ſhall always chooſe to deem them *Libellors* of mankind.

Such men may be ſaid, as my friend remarks, in his notes upon tranſlation, (g) to hold out the wrong ſide of the tapeſtry to view, by which all the

(g) *Eſſay on claſſic tranſlation*, in this work. See latter part of the *tranſlator to the reader*.

the beauties of colouring and proportion are concealed, and only the groſſer lines and coarſer figures expoſed.

The pleaſure, conſequent to acts of benevolence and charity, has been often miſtaken for the end; from whence ſelfiſhneſs has, by ſuperficial reaſons, been imputed to virtue. But a v y little abſtraction may help one to diſcover, that pleaſure is the *companion* only, and neither the *end*, or *motive*. To ſupport life and health, is the intent or purpoſe of eating and drinking To theſe, the reliſhes of taſte are added, from the meer bounty of Providence; to *gratify*, as well as *ſatisfy* the natural appetites. And the pleaſure ariſing in the mind, upon having done, or even deſigned any worthy action, may be ſomething analogous to this.

I ſhall make uſe of the above alluſion, farther, to carry me through the argument I would maintain; for I do not deny, that there is a *moral epicuriſm*, as well as a *natural one*; and that by frequent contemplation upon the *concomitant* pleaſure, it may become at length, the ſole *end*, in particular agents. So that virtue may thus be reduced to ſenſuality, and have its pure eſſence quite deſtroyed, in the minds of ſuch perſons. But ſurely, this does not alter its original nature, any more than different colours become one, becauſe the jaundiced eye perceives them alike, through a tainted medium.

It is a received opinion, that the bulk of mankind do not know the real motives from which they act. It is poſſible indeed that I, for inſtance, may be guided by princi les which I may be ignorant of. But then, in the name of common ſenſe, how come theſe preſu nptuous reaſoners

foners to be better acquainted with them,
am myſelf? When ſuch ſubtle philoſoph
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which. I am not conſcious of in my own
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maker, mentioned by *Ninon*, juſt now. (h, e

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actions only, in ſuch as are merely *mech*
But with regard to *moral* ones, the nature of
is determined by the *conſciouſneſs* of the
And if his reſolves ariſe ſimply, in his own
from principles of humanity, benevolence,
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pure and diſintereſted, notwithſtanding the
dant pleaſure, which ariſing only from ſubſe
reflection, can no more taint the excelle
the firſt impulſe, than poiſon thrown into a ſt
can infect its ſource.

Readers, farewel.

THE TRANSLA

(h) Letter LIII. laſt lines of firſt paragraph

F I N I S.